Portrait of a Punjabi Family

1800-1970

A JOURNEY INTO THE PAST

K.K. AZIZ

A Journey into the past

This is oral history at its best. It is the chronicle of a particular family's transformation under the influence and aegis of British rule in the Punjab. It shows how sensitivity to the call of time can change a people's fate. It throws light on the social evolution of the Punjab, a much-neglected field in our studies.

At the same time this book is the triple biography of the author's father, grandfather and great-grandfather and their spouses. In this remarkable narrative the reader will find a gripping story of three lives spent in the service of God, man and learning, their little but colourful thread in the warp and woof of modern history and the exciting and forceful role played by the principal ladies of the family.

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PREFACE

This volume should be considered as a prologue or prolegomenon to my autobiography which I am now writing. This connection between the two books is as much causal as it is natural. It may not always be true, but in my own case I find that blood and genes have made me a faithful copy of my direct ancesters. I share with them so much of my upbringing, thoughts, values, traditions, culture and outlook on life that I would have been a totally different person had I been born in another family. I believe that nobody can understand my situation in life, my frustrations and ambitions, my failures and ideals, my tastes and desires, my achievements and failures, without knowing a good deal about my parents, grandparents and great grandparents. I am what I am because they were what they were. There is no generation gap, but a seamless continuity. Hence the relevance of the book to my own life.

Six years ago I published a short book in Urdu on my elders, entitled *Woh Hawadis Ashna*. It was written when I was living in London and Cambridge and not all the archival material was before me. Some errors had also erept in. The present treatment is more authentic and comprehensive.

I hope the reader will find the story of my family of inherent interest. It illustrates several aspects of the nature of British rule in the Punjab and of native rule in Pakistan.

A good part of the history of a nation is a collection of the histories of its families. To this extent and viewed in this perspective, the book is a piece of history writing, throwing new light on the life of a certain class in the Punjab of the 19th. and 20th. centuries. It is also an exercise in analysing the social fabric of the province.

In writing these pages, I have used all the four sources available to me: whatever was left of family papers (the great bulk was lost in the holocaust of 1947), my father's short memoirs which he wrote on my request, what I heard year after year from my parents and other elders, and what I saw with my own eyes.

I am beholden to my wife for helping me in a dozen ways to transform a hurriedly written manuscript into a printed book.

Lahore
20 May 2005 K. K. Aziz

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ROOTS IN THE SOIL

THE BEAS

The known history of my family goes back to the reign of the Mughal Emperor Jahangir in terms of chronology, and touches two areas which in the British period came to be called *the districts* of Hoshiarpur and Gurdaspur in the northern corner of the eastern part of the Punjab. Time and territory might have marched together till the early part of the fifteenth century or even earlier in the sense that my ancient ancestors belonged to three places along the eastern bank of the river Beas: Dasuha, Mukerian and Kaithan. Then, at some unspecified time, one branch, from which I am directly descended, crossed the river and made its home in Kahnuwan on the water's western side almost directly opposite its original domicile. Two and a half centuries later the two branches found themselves placed in the two freshly demarcated administrative units of Hoshiarpur and Gurdaspur.

The Hoshiarpuris stayed on in their ancient homesteads till the great migration of 1947. The Gurdaspuris made another move in the 1870s and shifted 17 miles south from Kahnuwan to Batala; but still remaining within 20 miles

from their Hoshiarpuri cousins. The Batalavis, along with their diaspora in Amritsar, were forced out of their homes when the subcontinent was partitioned and all their original places allotted to the new Indian state. The cataclysm turned both cousins into wandering refugees, sundered their unity, scattered their families, loosened their blood relationship, and played havoc with their social traditions.

Among God's worldly creations nature came first and the man next. The stage was erected before the actor was allowed to tread the boards. In my own humble way I plan to follow my Maker and set the natural scene before introducing its human denizens. I will first describe the five places – Mukerian, Kaithan, Dasuha, Kahnuwan and Batala – where my ancestors lived for centuries and from whose soil came the clay of which I am made. But before the earth came the water. So I start with a river.

THE RIVER

For us the waters of a river forged the link which bound the first four homesteads. The Beas, one of the five rivers of the Punjab, nourished and nurtured us. For God knows how many centuries we quenched our thirst with its water, fed our lands on its largesse, and journeyed to new homes on its billowy breast. We crossed and recrossed its waters: sometimes to escape a passing marauder, sometimes to earn a new living, sometimes to visit our brothers and sisters, and sometimes to seek new homes. We lived on the river and off it and with it and by it. It governed our seasons, irrigated our fields, grew our corn, cooled our bodies, mixed with the soil to make our utensils, and carried us to distant places. It was our lifeblood. We were, if anything, the Beasis.

The Beas is an ancient waterway. It is the Bibasis of Ptolemy, the Hyphasis of Arrian, and Hypasia of Pliny. It was also known as the Beah and Veya, and even in the

nineteenth century locally by its Sanskrit name, Vipasa, corruptly Bipasha. It is also said to take its name from a sacred pool at its source, called Vyas Rishi, situated in the Rotang Pass, at the head of the Kullu valley. Descending the Kangra heights it flowed through the body of Mandi State and town, marked an upward curve and then at once a downward one below Jawalamukhi, ran due west, and towards the end upwards until it struck the border of district Gurdaspur at Mirthal. Now it swelled into the proper and respectable proportions of a river. The widest part was a little north of Kahnuwan where there was an extensive swamp. At Bhet ghat about 12 miles further south on the Batala-Hoshiarpur road the stream flowed immediately under the high bank. There were no bridges on this part of the river. The ferries were all under the charge of the Hoshiarpur authorities. The most important and most used were those of Bhet Ghat and Naushahra at which the river was crossed by the roads from Batala and Kahnuwan to Mukerian and Dasuha, and from there further east to Suket and Mandi and further south to Hoshiarpur. In British days it marked in its upper reaches the boundary between the Gurdaspur and Hoshiarpur districts, and in its lower reaches the one between the Amritsar district and Kapurthala State and for a very short stretch between the Amritsar and Jullundher districts. At Sultanpur, as if having done its duty of nourishing our family and giving life to its various homes, it sank its identity in the waters of the Sutlej.

All life emerged from water, and now I turn from the river to the earliest known lands on which my ancestors lived.

KAHNUWAN

The old town of Kahnuwan lay on the eastern side of Beas, standing on the high bank of the river and overlooking an extensive marsh; the low watery land stretched for miles down

an old channel of the river under the high bank. The town had a verifiable historical origin. It was founded by Kahna, a Rajput of the Nur clan, long before the Mughals came to India.

When Sher Shah Suri conquered the Punjab he ordered a body of the Afghans from Roh to settle in Kahnuwan and in the adjoining area across the Beas (later the British district of Hoshiarpur). In mid-19th. century some of these Pathans still held the villages of Kiri Afghanan about 3 miles south of Kahnuwan. After the fall of the Suri kingdom and the reassertion of the Mughals these Pathans began to cause trouble. In order to take the sting out of them Emperor Akbar placed Salho, a Harchand Rajput, in charge of this territory, and eventually the Harchands grew powerful enough and felt sufficiently safe from the degenerating Mughal imperial sway to drive out the Pathans and establish themselves firmly in Kahnuwan. The town was still held by the descendants of Harchands when my family left it for Batala. Akbar had given a grant of 360 villages to Salho, and the beneficiary had founded and given his own name to the adjacent village of Salhopur.

Emperor Babur, the founder of the Mughal empire, on his way to India, crossed the Beas opposite Kahnuwan and spent the night of 2-3 January 1526 very near it. In his memoirs he calls it Kanwahin, which his translator-annotator, Annette Beveridge, calls a "sarkar of Batala"; which means that at that time Kahnuwan lay in the jurisdiction of Batala.

Standing close to a large marsh and lying in a submontane tract, Kahnuwan had for centuries been a great sporting resort. Monarchs of the Delhi Sultanate and the Suri Kingdom often hunted and pursued the quarry round the place. After Akbar's pacification of the territory it became almost a royal preserve, highly prized for its animals and birds. Jahangir favoured it particularly and spent some time here every season with his close friends and personal retinue. Sometimes Empress Nurjahan accompanied him. The royal

chase enlivened the sleepy little place. A small city of magnificently appointed tents sprang up as if a fairy had waved her magic wand. Undreamt of things appeared in the bazaars: clothes, delicacies, armour, shoes and other articles of daily use or rare luxury. The imperial Persian flowed along with the local Punjabi of the territory as the visiting grandees mixed with the population. Tidings of Lahore, Delhi and Agra reached this corner of the empire and caused much amusement and some awe in the hearts of the simple villagers. Over the years the rude and simple rustics of the area became a little more civilized, a little more sophisticated and better informed. Without having visited Delhi and Lahore they knew how the Court lived and conducted its affairs. All in all, the Mughal huntsmen gave the Kahnuwanians a measure of excitement by this spectacle, a patina of refinement by this exposure, and a modicum of self-confidence by this contact. For a few weeks the subjects saw their masters from fairly close quarters, and the experience gave them pride and some appreciation of culture. Thus an obscure corner of the empire was given an opportunity to watch and borrow the airs, poise and the deportment of the imperial Court. I like to imagine that some of my direct ancestors refined their manners under this impact. Three hundred years later, two of their descendants were to add to this heritage the training of another royal court, this time by actual membership of it.

Two ancient buildings in the town traced their origins to Jahangir's time. One was the shrine of Shah Burhan, a Muslim saint who flourished in that reign. The other was the *gupha* or subterranean shrine of the Hindu Bairagi Bhagwanji.

During the Sikh period, Kahnuwan formed the *ta'luqa* (sub-division) of Gharota, and was first ruled by Sardar Jai Singh Kanhayya and then by his daughter-in-law Sada Kaur (Maharaja Ranjit Singh's mother-in-law) from her capital in Batala. In 1821 Ranjit Singh took it away forcefully from

Sada Kaur and, together with the *ta'luqas* of Talibpur, Kot Santokh Rai and others, gave it in service *jagir* to his son, Prince Sher Singh, who held it until his death in 1843, when it escheated to the Lahore Durbar; Batala formed a part of this estate. The whole area of Gharota was made up of seven villages and covered an area of 22,123 acres. When my great grandfather's widow decided to leave it for Batala its population was about 9,000, and it was a *zail* (a portion of a district smaller than a *tahsil*) of district Gurdaspur.

The Kahnuwan *chchamb* (swamp), which brought Jahangir to this town several times, was in part responsible for my great grandmother's decision to leave it for good. The watery tract ran almost the whole length of the *tahsil* from Pindori Baisan on the north to Bheri on the south, and was one of the most curious natural features of the area. To the north it was narrow and shallow, but broadened and deepened progressively until between the Gurdaspur-Naushahra road and Kahnuwan it was two and a half miles wide and at places 6-7 feet deep. The Sikh government dug an escape route from Kahnuwan onwards, which considerably reduced and drained it. The British improved the land rescue work after 1860. Suspecting that the swamping was caused by inundation from the Beas, an embankment was constructed at Pakhowal. But the local people declared that the embankment did more harm than good, and would have asked for its removal but for one advantage it offered: it provided an excellent road across the swamp in the rainy season. Its defects, however, were serious. The area of the swamp was not diminished. The floodwater was prevented from passing over the land, thus depriving it of the deposit of fertilizing river silt. The percolation from the Beas was not checked, and the soil continued to turn sour. The heaping up of the floods above the embankment seriously injured the crops of several villages. Even otherwise, the swamp lands were cultivated for three years successively and then allowed to lie fallow for three years, while the *banjari*

(infertile, rough, unwatered) lands around were allowed to rest every two years.

MUKERIAN, KAITHAN AND DASUHA

All these three towns later formed the British-demarcated district of Hoshiarpur. This area was the habitat of the Paleolithic man, for several Paleolithics were discovered near Daulatpur, Dholbaha and Pinjore sites on the Sohan (a local river not to be confused with the tributary of the Indus of the same name). There is added evidence of its antiquity. The Tilakhalas of the Mahabharata were probably the Tilabhalas and lived in this region, the principal crop-zone of sesame (*til*).

One branch of my family (especially that of my paternal grandmother) belonged to Mukerian and Kaithan (two small towns lying almost adjacent to each other) on the bank of the Beas and to Dasuha 10 miles to the south. It is not known why and when these branches of the family settled in Kahnuwan. Probably in ancient times it was not uncommon for a clan to occupy villages lying on the opposite banks of a river. The land was fertile, water was plentiful, dependence on rain was unnecessary, and the various families and households lived within a day's journeying by ox cart or on horseback or by boat. Anyhow, the majority of my grandfather's uncles were domiciled in the twin towns of Mukerian-Kaithan and in Dasuha, which lay close to the Beas, and were separated from each other by about 10 miles. Mukerian-Kaithan was in the north, closer to the river bank than Dasuha, and almost right opposite Kahnuwan across the waters. Dasuha lay southward, slightly further away from the river, and almost opposite to Batala which was on the other side of the Beas. The history of the entire family thus centres

on these five towns/villages: Mukerian, Kaithan, Dasuha, Kahnuwan and Batala; the last-named making its appearance in the latest period, though my mother's mother's ancestors had settled there much earlier.

Tradition associates several places, notably Dasuha, with the Pandavas of the Mahabharata. Prior to Muslim invasions, the modern district was undoubtedly a part of the Katoch kingdom of Trigartta or Jullundher; and when on an unknown date that kingdom broke up into numerous petty principalities, the Jaswan Rajas, a branch of the Katoch dynasty, established themselves in the Jaswan Dun. The plains probably came under permanent Muslim rule on the fall of Jullundher in 1088, but the hills remained under Hindu chieftains. In 1399 Timur ravaged the Jaswan Dun on his way to capture the Kangra fort. In this period the Khokhars appear to have been the dominant tribe in the district; and in 1421 Jasrath, their chief, revolted against the weak Sayyid ruling dynasty of Delhi, but in 1428 he was defeated near Kangra. After that several Pathan military colonies were planted in the place along the base of the Sivalik hills, and Bajwara became the headquarters. The fort of Malot, founded in the reign of Sultan Bahlol Lodhi by a Pathan grantee of the surrounding country, was Daulat Khan's stronghold. It played an important part in Babur's invasion, who crossed the Beas near Kahnuwan and in three marches reached Malot. After its surrender to his army, he crossed the Sivaliks into the Jaswan Dun and marched on Rupar. Under Sher Shah Suri the governor of Malot ruled all the hills as far as Kangra and Jammu. After 1596 the district settled down under Mughal rule.

The Rajas of Jaswan and Datarpur retained possession of their fiefs until 1759, when the rising Sikhs commenced a series of encroachments upon the hill tracts. First the Jaswan Raja lost a portion of his dominion, then he acknowledged the supremacy of Ranjit Singh's Lahore government, and

finally in 1815 he was forced to resign his territories in exchange for an estate held as a *jagir*. In 1818 the Raja of Datarpur met the same fate. Under Sikh rule most of the conquests were assigned to *jagirdars*, among whom were the deposed Rajas of Jaswan and Datarpur, the Sodhis (lineal descendants of Ram Das, the fourth Sikh guru) of Anandpur, and the Sikh prelate Bedi Bikram Singh. Below the Sivaliks, Hajipur and Mukerian, with a large tract of country, were held by Sher Singh (Ranjit Singh's son and successor), and governed by Sardar Lahna Singh Majithia as his agent. The country round Dasuha was given to Prince Tara Singh, a suppositious son of Ranjit Singh.

In 1846 the tract between the Sutlej and the Beas passed to the British. John (later Lord) Lawrence became the first Commissioner of the trans-Sutlej States; in 1848 the Commissioner was made subordinate to the Resident at Lahore, and in 1849 (when the annexation was complete) to the Punjab Board of Administration. The deposed Rajas of Datarpur and Jaswan received cash pensions in addition to the estates granted by Ranjit Singh. Bedi Bikram Singh was ousted. Part of the Sodhi estates were also resumed. The Mutiny of 1857 did not disturb the district.

As first constituted by the British, the district of Hoshiarpur consisted of 5 *tahsils*: Mukerian in the northern corner, Hariana, Hoshiarpur, Una and Garhshankar. In 1861 the Hariana *tahsil* was abolished and its western portion was made over to Mukerian *tahsil*, the headquarters of which were transferred to Dasuha. The district had an area of 2,244 square miles, and was bounded on the north and east by the western slopes of the Sola Singhi Hills which separated it from Kangra district and Bilaspur State; on the south by Jullundher district; and on the west by Gurdaspur district (the Beas being the dividing line) and a bit of Kapurthala State. In 1904 the Dasuha *tahsil* had an area of 501 square miles covering 4 towns and 633 villages,

a population of 239,004 out of which 6,952 were literate. In the district as a whole, the Hindus were 60% of the total, Muslims 32% and Sikhs 7%. There were 10 ferries crossing the Beas into the Batala and Amritsar areas.

As my ancestors combined the professions of cultivation and medicine, some knowledge about the land and its produce is relevant. Along the Beas, where our lands were situated, were strips of purely alluvial ground over which the water spread when in flood. The soil was a mixture of sand and loam, and much of it was very productive. In Dasuha the Behanwali *khad*, rising in the northern part of the Sivalik Range, flowed northward into the Beas.

Like Kahnuwan, here too the family had to face the problems created by the *chchambs*. Due west of Mukerian lay the Kalabagh swamp which had an outlet near Bagroi. Between the towns of Dasuha and Tanda and the Beas river there extended a long broken tract of marsh land. It was probably the ancient bed of the Beas and was fed by several torrents from the Sivaliks. The Mukerian-Dasuha territory was a well-wooded submontane tract, watered by a perennial stream of some size, the western or Black Bein, which rose in the swamps near Dasuha and flowed into Kapurthala State.

The principal natural feature was the *chos*, or seasonal torrents, which, rising in the Sivaliks, spread like a network over the plain. Dry in the rainless months, they turned into raging torrents after heavy rain and occurred almost every mile. A *cho* rose in the hills, below the watershed, left them by a narrow outlet, and widened on its way through the plains until it broke up into a number of branches. The different parts of a *cho* were given appropriate names. *Para* was a small ravine, or rather the perimeter of a small ravine; several *paras* drained into a *tota*, which also included the combined parameters and slopes of those several *paras*. Several *totas* made up a *choa*, and several *choas* a *khad* or main *cho*. A *panga* was the top part of the slopes of a *choa*,

and a *mukhala* was the junction of a *tota* and a *choa* or a *choa* and a *khad*. A *lanna* was the lower part of a *panga*, and a *topal* was the flat space on the top of a *panga*. A *bahra* was a field on a level spot in the middle of a *panga*.

Mukerian lay about 10 miles north of Dasuha, hardly a mile from the Beas, 22 miles east of Batala across the river, and about 34 miles from Hoshiarpur city. The roads to Naushahra and Mirthal ferried on the Beas and branched off from here. The greater part of the town was built of burnt bricks, and the whole of it was situated in the middle of a high level plain. It is said to have been founded by Chaudhri Dara Khan, an Awan, in 1754; in about 1768 Sardar Jai Singh Kanhayya enlarged and improved it. Ranjit Singh captured the neighbouring fort of Atalgarh in 1819; near the fort was a fine tank named after Sada Kaur, the Maharaja's famous mother-in-law. Prince Sher Singh, son of Ranjit Singh, was born in Mukerian of Mahtab Kaur.

The town and its suburbs contained some imposing buildings. Sardar Bur Singh had built a very fine tank and a large caravanserai of well-constructed masonry, an interesting feature of which was a specially appointed room for European visitors and guests. Some good gardens lay around the town. The place was a wheat marketing centre, where the traders sold grain wholesale to outside merchants from Amritsar, Jullundher, Batala and Tanda. The municipality was created in 1867. At the turn of the century its population was 3,589.

Dasuha was situated 5 miles east of the Beas, 22 miles east of Batala across the river, 10 miles south of Mukerian, 11 miles north of Tanda, and 25 miles north-west of Hoshiarpur city. Like Mukerian it lay on the road to the Naushahra and Mirthal ferries on the Beas. The town was built on a mound on the edge of a marsh.

Tradition has it that it was founded 5,000 years ago, and was the capital of Raja Virata who is mentioned in the Mahabharata. Till 1947 the Hindus called it Virat ki Nagri;

and it was one of the places about which there was a superstition against pronouncing its name before breakfast. A Hindu speaking of it early in the morning would generally call it Virat ki Nagri instead of Dasuha. There was an old fort north of the town, which is mentioned in the *Ain-i-Akbari*, and it served as a stronghold of the Ramgarhias and was annexed in 1817 by Ranjit Singh who kept it for 14 years and then bestowed it, along with the surrounding villages, on Prince Tara Singh. Most of it was demolished in 1848, leaving one of the towers standing. The magnificent Sanchwala tank could be seen intact till 1940 when I visited the town.

The Dasuha municipality was created in 1867, and in 1901 the population of the town was 6,404. The landed proprietors were Muslim Rajputs, Arains and Pathans. The land was fertile. The heat was not excessive. Bharwain, the hill station, lay 22 miles to the east.

SUKET AND MANDI

Two small native states, both lying about 80 miles east of Mukerian and Dasuha, are also associated with my family, and therefore require a brief reference.

Suket lay north of the Sutlej river, which separated it from the Simla hill states. Till about 1330 it included the territory which later formed the Mandi State, when a distant branch of the ruling family assumed independence. Later it came under the Lahore Sikh rule, and in 1846 under British control. The British were quick to concede full sovereignty to the Raja, Ugra Sen. The area of the state was 420 square miles; the population in 1901 was 54,676, of whom 54,005 were Hindus. The annual revenue was Rs. 1.1 lakh, part of it realized in kind. The capital, Baned, was 3,050 feet above sea level, was picturesquely situated in a valley, and in 1901 had 2,237 inhabitants.

Mandi was situated in the upper reaches of the Beas, and was separated from the Kullu Valley by the Nargu range. On the south it adjoined Suket and on the west the Kangra district. It was 54 miles long and 33 broad, and in area 1,200 square miles of mountainous country. The population in 1901 was 174,045, with only 3,187 Muslims among it. The language spoken was Mandiali. Raja Bhawani Sen, who had been educated at the Aitchison Chiefs' College of Lahore, ruled with the help of a 6,00-strong Rajput aristocracy. In those days one travelled from Mukerian or Dasuha to Dera, a distance of about 38 miles, crossed the Beas by boat, then went up to Jawalamukhi, and then on to Mandi or Baned, a total of bad and uncared for 120 odd miles. The capital, Mandi, had in 1901 a population of 8,144. Founded in 1527, it had the Beas passing through it and spanned by the handsome iron Empress Bridge. The Suket stream joined the Beas below the town and was bridged by the Fitzpatrick Bridge. The town was one of the chief marts for commerce with Ladakh and Yarkand.

GURDASPUR DISTRICT

We must now cross the Beas and go over to district Gurdaspur in which Kahnuwan and Batala were situated.

One Mahant Guriaji is said to have come from his ancestral village Gurdaspur in the Pathankot tahsil to another small village, liked it, purchased it, and made it his permanent home. His new possession also came to be known as Gurdaspur, either in memory of his previous village, or after his own name (from Guriaji), or because of a mixture of both versions. Whatever the truth in the story, Gurdaspur had the distinction of being the only village in the Punjab to be elevated to the status of district headquarters. Climate helped in the making of the official decision.

After the annexation of the Punjab by the British in April 1849, orders were issued to form a new district of Adinanagar which was to include two-thirds of the Bari Doab north of Amritsar. Adinanagar, located half way between Gurdaspur and Pathankot towns and up in the north, was selected as the headquarters of the district as Batala was considered to be too far south. But in July the civil officers and the military escort were transferred to Batala and installed in Maharaja Sher Singh's house in Anarkali as Adinanagar was thought to be unhealthy. In the autumn, however, it was deemed that Batala was too much exposed to floods, and Gurdaspur was selected as a suitable site for the district station. On 1 May 1852 the treasury and the district were officially renamed Gurdaspur.

The territories and boundaries of the district underwent several changes. From 1 March 1852, 83 villages south of a line running from the Ravi at Shahpur to the Chakki above Pathankot were transferred to Gurdaspur. In 1853, the Shakargarh *tahsil* was taken away from Sialkot and given to Gurdaspur, some 107 villages in the south-east were added to Batala *tahsil* from Amritsar, and a separate *tahsil* of Pathankot was formed out of 99 villages in the delta between the Ravi and the Ujh and 181 villages from Gurdaspur *tahsil* and Kangra area. In August 1860, Dalhousie, which had been acquired from Chamba State, was added to the district. In April 1867, the Batala *tahsil* was transferred to Amritsar district. In the same year, a fixed boundary line between Gurdaspur and Hoshiarpur districts was laid down on the Beas in place of the old deep-stream rule boundary. On 1 April 1869, the 1867 decision was reversed and Batala *tahsil* was taken away from Amritsar. In 1879 and 1882 the boundary between the Kapurthala State and Batala *tahsil* was demarcated on the Beas.

No less than three successive lieutenant governors of the Punjab were directly associated with the early (1849-

91) revenue settlement of the district: Sir R.H. Davies, Sir R.E. Egerton and Sir J. B. Lyall. In 1915 the district stood second in the amount of land revenue paid among the districts of the province. The Amritsar-Pathankot railway was taken in hand in 1882 and opened to traffic the next year. The district had 906,126 inhabitants in 1868, 823,695 in 1881, and 943,922 in 1891.

In vegetation and cultivation Gurdaspur was far ahead of most other districts. In 1868 72% of the entire area was under tillage. The submontane climate, better use of land, natural fertility and hardworking cultivators made a happy combination. Nature and man co-operated to add beauty to the area. "The district", said the *Gazetteer* for 1891-92, "is famed for its superb avenues on many lines of road, and probably no district in the Punjab can show such long lines of fine trees which stretch for miles with hardly a break." On the picturesqueness of the scene Col. Harcourt wrote in the 1915 *Gazetteer*: "The scenery of the whole of this submontane tract . . . is extremely beautiful . . . . Probably no district in the Punjab would offer such facilities to the landscape painter."

For those with an interest in history the district provided much material. The last camp of Alexander the Great before he began his return march is supposed to have been on the bank of the Beas, probably in this district. Babur had crossed the same river from Kahnuwan in his invasion of India. During the Mughal period Batala was an important capital, and it was in the nearby Kalanaur that Akbar the Great was crowned emperor. About Kalanaur there was an ancient proverb to the effect that "he who has not seen Lahore, at least let him see Kalanaur". During the Sikh days several portions of the district (particularly Batala and its environs, as we will see in the following section on Batala) played a more important and pregnant part than even Lahore and Amritsar.

In relation to the times the district was, already in the last quarter of the nineteenth century, more industrialized than the bulk of the province. On 4 May 1877 the Sujjanpur Sugar Works were registered as a manufacturing concern, and production started on 17 November 1878. The plant was located on the banks of the Bari Doab Canal about half a mile from the Sujjanpur town. Extensive mango orchards on both sides of the canal saved the area from deteriorating into an industrial eyesore. The Egerton Woollen Mills were started in 1880 at Dhariwal, and manufacturing began in October 1882. The mill changed hands in 1890 and added the word "New" to its name. Built on the banks of the Bari Doab Canal, it was worked by the water power derived from the fall of that place; when the canal was closed for annual desilting or for other reasons, water power was supplemented by steam. It made woollen cloth, worsted cloth and hosiery of all kinds. The residential colony of the managerial and technical staff consisted of nice little bungalows separated by green lawns. As most of the occupants were Indian Christians and a few were Europeans, the houses were kept scrupulously clean, the grounds in neat trim, the perennial shrubs in the bud, and seasonal flowers in bloom. I lived there for a few days in 1943 in the home of Alfred Prio Scott who was my class fellow at the Forman Christian College, Lahore, and whose father worked at the mill.

In the north of the district lay Pathankot where the railway line coming from Amritsar had its terminus. The small town (the population in 1901 was only 6,000) had both historical and contemporary importance. According to General Cunningham, the name was a corruption of Pratisthana, "the established city", and had nothing to do with the Pathans. It was from ancient times held by Rajput chiefs who made it their life work to fight against the Mughals. Raja Bakht Mal fought on the side of Sikandar Suri at Mankot. Bas Deo rebelled against Akbar. Suraj Mal

revolted against Jahangir. Jagat Singh opposed Shahjahan and accompanied Dara Shikoh to Qandhar. The state of Pathankot was taken over by Ranjit Singh in 1815.

The town was vitally placed as the only accessible doorway to the hills ascending to the north-east. Kashmir began a mere 20 miles away in the north, Chamba 25 miles to the south east, and Palampur 70 miles due east. As the Punjabis now go to Murree and Abbotabad, in those days they went up, in smaller numbers of course, in summers to all these places and Dalhousie through Pathankot. Comfortable and punctual bus services ran from Pathankot to these hill stations.

In this district were located the two towns with which the life of my ancestors and my own are intertwined like a climber crawling up and then enlacing and hugging a tree trunk. Kahnuwan and Batala were the sturdy and smooth trunks; we were the creepers. I have already described Kahnuwan. But as I never lived there, for me it was Batala which nourished and brought me up. I now turn to this paradise lost.

BATALA

HISTORY OF THE TOWN

During the second half of the fourteenth and first half of the fifteenth centuries the country between the Sutlej and the Chenab was to a great extent a wasteland because of the disastrous floods and the ravages of Jasrat Gakkhar. Consequently, in 1465, during the reign of Sultan Bahlol Lodhi, Tatar Khan, the powerful Lodhi governor of Lahore (who was killed in 1485 in a battle against Prince Nizam who later became Sultan Sikandar Lodhi) farmed out the revenues of the province to Rai Ram Deo for 9 lakh tankas. Ram Deo was a Bhatti Rajput who had been converted to Islam by Shaikh Musa Ahangar of Lahore, and as such was patronized by Tatar Khan; but historians do not mention his Muslim name.

Once Ram Deo had signed the contract and taken charge of his new domain he set about improving the state of the territory. The work of reclamation was taken in hand. The tract was fertile as it lay between two big rivers. With some effort and attention the area became not only habitable but prosperous and a source of profit. Desolation gave way to an affluent population, and the wilderness was turned into a busy place of agriculture and soon into a humming mart where the produce of the fields and the product of cottage industry were sold or exchanged.

For his residence and administrative centre Ram Deo selected a place near what was to be Batala and built several buildings. Here the historical tradition bifurcates. According to one, every wall or building erected during the day sank during the night. According to the other, a good part of the new town had been put up when it was discovered that water was seeping into the foundations of the buildings including the outer boundary wall. Ram Deo was angry and frustrated and took the tale of woe to a Muslim dervish. The pious man suggested a change of venue and indicated a mound in the neighbourhood as the new place where the town should be founded. His advice was followed. The new town was built and everything went well. Impressed by the spiritual insight of the dervish and gladdened by the security of his new capital, Ram Deo embraced Islam.

Whatever the truth in either story, it gave the town its name. One site had been exchanged for another. The Punjabi word for change or exchange is *batana* or *vatana* (in many old Punjabi words originally derived from Sanskrit the letters "b" and "v" are interchangeable), and the dervish had said "*than bata lai*" (change the site). The "*bata lai*" order christened the town as Batala or Vatala (with the middle "a" drawn out in pronunciation).

Ram Deo Bhatti lived happily in his brand new town, proved a competent administrator, collected fair revenues

on behalf of the provincial governor, developed the area under his control, and died peacefully in an unrecorded year in Batala. He was buried to the south-west of his town, outside the Thatiari Gate, and the tomb, which lay under a solid building with a sloping dome supported on enormously thick walls laid in mud, was extant till the closing years of the nineteenth century.

Batala must have been founded at an auspicious moment because from its very birth it took in the hall of history a seat more prominent than any other Punjabi town of comparable size and, with only brief intervals, kept it with honour. The first coat of paint was still fresh on its buildings when it became the headquarters of a new *pargana*, probably during the governorship of Daulat Khan Lodhi. There were several towns of respectable pedigree and larger population in the region, like Kahnuwan, Kalanaur, Pathankot and Fatehgarh; among the new ones could be counted Dera Baba Nanak, Sri Hargobindpur, Qadian and Dinanagar. But Batala lay nearly midway between Lahore and Pathankot, and its central location must have been a major contributory factor to its new status as a *pargana*. Several villages sprang up around it, some of which were soon to rise to eminence: Rangar Nangal, Jhanda, Talwandi, Bhagowal and others. The fertility of the soil also helped to make it an important part of the province.

In 1527 a *farman* of Emperor Babur mentions Batala explicitly as a *pargana*, and it retained this status throughout the Mughal period. The titles of the administrative and executive officials changed to mark the transfer of power from the Afghans to the Mughals. The former *shiqdar* became the *faujdar*, and the *amin* the *karori* or the *'amil* (the *kardar* of the later Sikh period). Under Ranjit Singh the head of the *pargana* was called *hakem*; this was the title used for Shah Din, son of Faqir Azizuddin, who was appointed to the office in 1821-22.

Batala had its own *qazi*, and the first person known by name to have held the office was Qazi Jalal whose grant was confirmed by Babur in 1527. The *qazi* was assisted by a mufti, and the earliest man whom we can identify as mufti was Ghulam Muhammad in the 44th. year of Aurungzeb's reign. At some unspecified time a small gate came to be called Qazimori, a long street was given the name of Qazi di Hatti (in my time called Qadihatti), and an enclosed quarter of the city was given the title of Muftian Mohalla (to which belonged the leading man of letters of our own day, Mumtaz Mufti), apparently because the successive *muftis* chose to live there or had their official residences at that place.

During the decline and fall of the Mughal dynasty and the rise of the Sikh power Batala played an even more important part in history. The connection with the Sikhs went even further back. Baba Nanak, the founder of the Sikh religion, married in 1445 Sulakhni, the daughter of one Mula, a *khatri* of Pakhoki in *tahsil* Batala. Baba Nanak lived a great deal in Pakhoki, his wife's village, and died in 1538 at Kartarpur some four miles off on the opposite bank of the Ravi. Pakhoki was later renamed as Dera Baba Nanak. On the banks of the great tank at Achal, near Batala, there was a shrine connected with Guru Nanak and known as Bér Sahib, containing a shoot from a *bér* tree under which he was supposed to have sat.

In 1710, Banda, who led the Sikhs after the death of Guru Gobind Singh in 1706, captured and razed Sarhind, crossed the Beas, and, notwithstanding a bold stand made by Shaikh-ul-Ahad, one of the Sayyids of the place, seized and plundered Batala. It is from this time that the decay of Batala as a home of learning dates.

At Nadir Shah's invasion of 1738, Adina Beg (an arain of Sharaqpur near Lahore, and founder of Adina Nagar, later called Dinanagar) was governor of Sultanpur, and

later in 1755-56 of Lahore, and in 1758 also of Jullundher Doab with the assistance of the Sikhs who had by this time their strongholds in Gurdaspur and Jullundher. By now the Sikhs, under Jassa Singh Kalal, were strong enough to drive the Afghans out of Lahore. But when they tried to get rid of Adina Beg, he retaliated by calling in the Marathas with the promise of payment of one lakh rupees for each march and fifty thousand rupees for each halt. They readily complied with the request, and with their help he drove Timur Shah from Lahore, made himself governor of the Punjab, fixed Batala as his capital, and extended his power as far as Multan on the west and Kangra on the east and north. But in the same year, 1758, he was seized by a colic and died in Batala, whence his body was taken to Khanpur (a village near Hoshiarpur) and buried there. Adina Beg had invited Mughlani Begum, the widow of Muinul Mulk, to come and live in Batala where he had offered her a large mansion worthy of her position; she used it as a royal establishment but personally lived in Adina Beg's camp. He also founded a new town in the upper Bari Doab and called it after his own name: Adina Nagar.

The Maratha commander Sabaji, while retreating before the Afghan general Jahan Khan in 1759, stayed in Batala for a few days. In 1764, Ahmad Shah Abdali spent some days in Batala, plundering the countryside and paying reverential visits to its saints.

After Adina Beg's death the Sikhs regained confidence, and so began their great campaign of reconquest and reorganization. In 1762, Jai Singh Kanhayya and Jassa Singh Ramgarhia joined together and seized Batala, Kalanaur, Qadian and Srigobindpur. They were the first Sikh rulers to occupy the town of Batala. Then they lost it for some time, but regained it and gave it to one brother of Jassa Singh, Mala Singh, and Kalanaur to another brother, Tara Singh. But Mala Singh turned out to be a brigand and

a tyrant. In about 1775, with the help of the *qanungos*, the zamindars and the *muqaddams* of the town, Jai Singh turned out Mala Singh and forcibly occupied Batala.

This falling out of the *misals* made the Batala *tahsil* a battleground. The territory was studded with the mud forts of the various Ramgarhia and Kanhayya chieftains who were now perpetually engaged in petty warfare. Ferment, disorder and fighting overwhelmed the tract. Life was uncertain and hazardous, and maiming or death could be expected at any time of day or night. Jai Singh Kanhayya's son, Gurbakhsh, expelled Mala Singh from Batala and Tara Singh from Kalanaur. A little later, Jassa Singh Ramgarhia recovered Batala, and during the battle Gurbakhsh Singh lost his life. After occupying the town Jassa Singh fortified it against future and expected attacks and started building a thick wall around it, beginning from the boundary on the south. These preparations proved of no avail, and before Batala had seen many moons Jai Singh struck a hard blow, beat Jassa Singh and drove him across the Beas.

But that did not settle anything. The next swing of the see-saw of power came in 1783. Jai Singh Kanhayya now betrothed his grand daughter, Mahtab Kaur (daughter of Gurbakhsh Singh, who had been killed in the battle of Batala, and Sada Kaur), to Ranjit Singh, the son of Maha Singh Sukerchakia and the future king of the Punjab. Taking full advantage of this dynastic tie, Maha Singh allied himself with Jassa Singh and the combined strength of the Sukerchakias and the Ramgarhias attacked Batala. A fierce battle was fought near the tank of Achal (a village four miles south-east of Batala), and Jai Singh Kanhayya was beaten. He fled from Batala. Sada Kaur escaped barefoot to Sayian, a village two miles to the west of the town. Jassa Singh once again held Batala for a few years, and then once again lost it to Jai Singh.

After Jai Singh's death in 1792, Sada Kaur began to rule in the name of Gurbakhsh Singh, her deceased husband.

Two years earlier (1790), she had married her daughter Mahtab Kaur to Ranjit Singh. The wedding took place in Batala. Sada Kaur practically ruled her Kanhayya misal up to 1811, when she was overthrown by her son-in-law, Ranjit Singh. But as long as she was in power she put the impress of her talent on the town and was remembered for her administrative capability long after her disappearance from the stage of history. To the south of the city, close to the wall, she erected her strong citadel, and on the west and north of the town she threw up two smaller outworks. How Sada Kaur the woman and Batala the town played their crucial part in making Ranjit Singh the Maharaja of the Punjab is a story so full of romance, adventure and political treachery that it needs to be told in some detail.

Even after her marriage to Mahtab Kaur, Ranjit Singh continued to be the leader of his Sukerchakia band but his rule was confined to Gujranwala. However, things were shaping up on the horizon which in their fullness were to raise him to the throne of the Punjab with the help of the Rani of Batala. Lahore was then under the control of a troika of Sikh sardars: Sobha Singh, Lahna Singh and Gujjar Singh. The last-named had his headquarters at the place now called Qila Gujjar Singh, and his mud fort was situated on the spot where later the British established the railway police lines on McLeod Road. The misrule of the three sardars was one of the darkest periods in the history of Lahore. The lack of scruples and the temper of severity recalled the eighteenth-century Afghan spoliation and devastation of the province. But in one important way the Sikh tyranny offered darker prospects. The Afghan looters came and went, the Punjab bent under the storm and then stood up when it passed way. The Sikhs were here to stay, the Mughal shield had rusted away a long time ago, there was no saviour in sight, and the chances of a deliverer appearing from nowhere were poor. The people of Lahore,

especially the Muslims, saw only one ray of light piercing their gloom. Kamal Muhammad Khan, the chieftain of Multan, who ruled over Sahiwal, Kamalia, Pakpattan and Gogirah, should be asked to extend his sway to Lahore and put an end to the Sikh sardars' misgovernment.

At this time the keys of the Lahore fort were in the keeping of one Mohkam Din, an arain of the city, and an ancestor of my cousin and the distinguished cricketer Abdul Hafeez Kardar. The Lahori Muslims secretly chose a deputation, made Mohkam Din its head, and sent it poste haste to Multan with an urgent appeal to Kamal Muhammad Khan to come to their rescue. The deputation offered the keys of Lahore to him. The Multan warlord's reply was succinct and sharp: "My hold over my own domain is taxing my strength to its limit. My back is not broad enough to bear an extra burden. Thank you for thinking of me."

The deputation left Multan with its spirits at their lowest ebb. On its way back, in sheer desperation, it thought of approaching Ranjit Singh. The same appeal was now made to him and Mohkam Din promised to surrender the keys he was carrying if Ranjit Singh undertook to relieve the miseries of Lahore. The Sikh asked for a short respite so that he could consult with another band. The deputation agreed and returned to Lahore with some hope in its heart.

Ranjit Singh decided to seek the help of his in-laws, the Kanhayyas of Batala. His mother-in-law, Sada Kaur, was the undisputed and popular ruler of Batala and its environs, and she could raise an energetic and vigorous garrison to reinforce Ranjit Singh's army. An emissary rode fast the 80 miles from Gujranwala to Batala and gave the following terse, frantic and almost incoherent message to Sada Kaur: "My father is not alive. To whom can I look for help? You are my mother-in-law; I am your son. With your assistance I can be the king of the Punjab. The people of Lahore are fed up with Sobha Singh, Lahna Singh and Gujjar Singh.

They will welcome me with open arms. The fort will be mine if I am determined. Will you help me?"

Sada Kaur heard the frenzied message, reflected on its implications, and saw in its pith the fulfilment of many of her own ambitions. With her help the family would march forth on the broad avenue of conquest and glory leading to the unchallenged sway over the entire province. The Sikhs would rule over a rich land which was also their home and the origin of their faith. They would at last stand on an equal footing with the Mughal empire whose sovereignty was by now confined to the Delhi tract, and that too in a cribbed and abridged state. The prospects promised much, a golden opportunity beckoned, the summons merited a positive response, and Sada Kaur conveyed to the messenger her decision to back up her resolute, daring and venturesome son-in-law.

Details were quickly settled, warriors mustered, and plans finalized. On the appointed day Ranjit Singh left Gujranwala for Lahore with his army. Simultaneously Sada Kaur's reinforcements, which contained many Muslims, set out from Batala under the command of one Gamé Khan. The Batala contingent was larger and better organized than the Gujranwala forces. When the Batala army reached the present-day railway colony of Mayo Road, Gujjar Singh emerged from his mud fort in Qila Gujjar Singh and tried to stop its advance. The effort proved a fiasco and the defenders fled towards the Delhi Gate and the later-day railway station. There they met Ranjit Singh's soldiers who gave them short shrift. The defence lay tattered, and the two invading groups joined to enter the inner city through the Delhi Gate. There was no opposition and the city lay open up to the fort. Lahore had been won with the decisive help of Sada Kaur of Batala.

Ranjit Singh's ambitions overrode gratitude, family loyalty, respect for the mother of his wife, and all such refined values and feelings. The first morsel that he decided

to gobble was the rich and productive lands of Batala and Amritsar. But the determined mother-in-law stood in the way. To soften her persistence with his practised wiles, he came to Batala, ostensibly for a rest and a holiday. He stayed for a whole month, devoting the time to persuading Sada Kaur to transfer her possessions to her grandson, Sher Singh, who was the son of Ranjit Singh himself. The lady was not unfamiliar with state conspiracies and political ruses. She had seen more of the world, fought more battles, and suffered more reverses than her son-in-law. In consultation with her chief adviser, Gamé Khan, she told Ranjit Singh that she would transfer her entire state to Sher Singh once he (Ranjit Singh) had transferred one half of his state to his son.

How could he do that? He returned to Lahore, boiling with rage and bitter with frustration. He was too weak to conquer Batala – yet; but too greedy to let it go till he had tried the meanest trickery. If the mother-in-law was intractable and beyond his reach, well! he could vent his anger on her daughter. As soon as he reached Lahore he imprisoned his wife, Mahtab Kaur, in Haveli Mian Khan and began to torture her, in the hope that when the ill news of her daughter's sufferings reached Batala Sada Kaur would relent and do his bidding.

The news did reach Batala, but did not produce the expected result. Sada Kaur knew how cruel Ranjit Singh could be. For a few months she ate her heart out on the thoughts of what was being done to her daughter. Then, one day she summoned Gamé Khan and said, "It was on your advice that I refused to comply with Ranjit Singh's demand. Now my daughter is living in a hell of my making. Think of a way to save her. Go to Lahore, get her released and bring her to me." Gamé Khan emerged from the audience chamber, chastened, determined to make amends for the pitiable aftermath of his advice, resolved to prove

his loyalty to his queen, and bent upon bringing about a reunion of the two regnant ladies.

For this perilous but gallant adventure he chose two men: Muhammad Ali Khan (the great grandfather of Ashiq Batalavi, Agha Babur and Ejaz Batalavi) and Malik Bassé Khan. Historical details of the doings of the tiny adventurous band led by the two men are lacking. What can be pieced together from bits of contemporary reports is that that they first made their secret way to Amritsar which was then known as Granthgarh, spied among Ranjit Singh's army quartered in the city, made some surreptitious inquiries regarding Mahtab Kaur's whereabouts, and then left for Lahore.

Once in the capital, they managed to locate the imprisoned Rani in the haveli of Mian Khan, succeeded in releasing her from bondage, and then Muhammad Ali put her on his own horse and rode hell for leather towards Batala. Ranjit Singh was informed of the outrage a little too late, and when his horsemen set out to intercept and capture the intruders the Rani was already in Batala, safe in the lap and dominion of her mother. What had looked impossible had come true. The ladies wept with joy, exchanged reminiscences, and planned their future.

Ranjit Singh was still too weak to take Batala by assault and, after testing the mettle of his redoubtable mother-in-law, reluctant to make the break with Batala a permanent political stalemate. Negotiations were opened between the rulers of Lahore and Batala. Ranjit Singh was the lord of a much greater city, enjoyed larger resources, and commanded a reliable army. But his wife was in the hands of an adversary whose firm hold over Batala was rooted in the popularity of her person and the loyalty of her people. If the worst came to the worst, she knew she could rely on the town to make a determined stand against an invasion or siege.

And even if that failed, she could exploit the geography of her territory. Batala lay in the foothills of a range of mountains

which ascended to inaccessible heights through slopes, gorges, ravines, crags, trails and passes to cross which was a Sysphian toil. If Ranjit Singh's victory seemed inevitable, she could escape northward with Mahtab Kaur and her crack troops into these hills and, passing through Kahnuwan and Pathankot, without having to cross the Beas, disappear leaving hardly a trace behind her. The Raja of Lahore could burn down Batala, put its populace to the sword, and turn a prosperous habitation into a howling desolation. But that would lose him forever the two things he prized most: his wife and a peaceful and stable extension of his empire to the east of Lahore. The smiling lands and flourishing industry of Amritsar and Batala sang a siren song to him. Nor would Sada Kaur have contemplated with equanimity the prospects of running away from Batala and founding a new state in the valleys and plateaus of an unfamiliar territory. Political necessity and dynastic ties goaded the brave Sada Kaur and the wily Ranjit Singh into a negotiated peace and a family settlement.

When things became normal enough to talk, Ranjit Singh arrived in Batala in the company of his son, Sher Singh, with smiles on his face and doves of peace hovering over his processional entry into the gateway of the mansions of his in-laws near Achli Gate. Sada Kaur received him amid pomp and glory. She did him all the honours traditionally associated with royal visits, and added to them the special welcome and hospitality of a Punjabi mother-in-law receiving her son-in-law at her residence. Old relationships were revived. Black memories were set aside. A new era of glad affiliation was sworn in. Courtesy was shown by both sides. At the end of a few days' stay Ranjit Singh left for Lahore with his willing wife, his son who had fallen in love with Batala and in his heart selected it for his future residence, and a feeling of satisfaction at a difficult problem sorted out without bloodshed or deepening hostility. The year was 1811.

After a while Ranjit Singh invited Sada Kaur to Lahore, professedly to let his people know of the reconciliation, actually to wreak a mean vengeance on the woman who had dared to thwart his will. Once the people of Lahore had seen Sada Kaur honoured in the company of their ruler and the political motive of her visit had been publicly demonstrated, Ranjit Singh imprisoned her in the fort, then transferred her into its dungeons, tortured her, and finally extracted from her bruised hands and aching heart the surrender of her state of Batala to Prince Sher Singh.

The Prince lost no time in taking possession of his new dominion. But once he began to administer it he discovered how closely Sada Kaur had woven the web of the government around her own personality, initiative, native shrewdness, and a niche in the affections of the people. He was soon forced to bring her to Batala in honour and to make her his chief counsellor. She had loved Batala and its people and, disregarding her bitterness and vanquishing her anger at the way Ranjit Singh had humiliated her, accepted the offer which fulfilled her two great desires: to exercise power (though now a little trimmed by Sher Singh's presence) and to serve the people of Batala.

For his residence in Batala, Sher Singh rejected Sada Kaur's fort at Achli Gate in favour of a new palace which he built in the north-east outside the boundary wall of the town. He called this palace Anarkali, and a poignant but probably apocryphal story hangs from the name.

In Emperor Akbar's time, when for several years the Mughal empire had its capital in Lahore, a fascinating drama played itself out in tragedy in the fort. Prince Salim, the heir apparent pet named Shaikhu and the future Nuruddin Jahangir, the fourth of the great Mughals, fell in love with a maidservant called Nadira, who because of her extraordinary loveliness had been given the title of Anarkali – pomegranate bud. The exquisite passion of the

young prince was returned in equal measure by the beautiful commoner, and the affair would have run its smooth course to wherever such liaisons end, a wedding or the withering away of a passing fancy, but for the corroding jealousy of another maidservant, ironically called Dilaram (heart's solace), who thought up a horrifying conspiracy to avenge the Prince's rejection of her own love for him.

One evening when Akbar was holding a private court amid his family and close relatives and the musical programme included a Persian ghazal to be sung by Anarkali, Dilaram first made Anarkali drink more alcohol than she could hold and then placed a large mirror in a corner at such an angle that the Emperor could see both Anarkali and Prince Salim without their being aware of it. When the inebriate Anarkali began to sing, her befuddled brain forgot the reality of her surroundings and saw only her lover sitting before her. When she came to the most expressive verses she not only looked straight into the eyes of the Prince but winked at him. The fury of the outraged Emperor overwhelmed the gathering. Anarkali was arrested and thrown into the darkest dungeon of the fort. Salim was banished from filial affection and interned in his suite of rooms.

Akbar took no further action in the fond belief that the callow romance would have its natural end with the separation of the lovers and the knowledge of imperial disapproval. But Salim's love was made of sterner stuff, and lost in the pangs of his pain he became wildly indiscreet, and on one occasion threatened to kill his father in order to marry his beloved. The report of the utterance was carried to the throne, and the engine of imperial anger swung into action. Salim's mother argued her first born's case with eloquence and tears, cajoling, beseeching, craving for understanding, begging for mercy, reminding the monarch that he was also a father and a human being, crying her eyes out. Nothing was of any avail. To the

hardy, self-made Chughtai Turk the future of his empire was more important than the agony of his consort, the heartstrings of the heir apparent and the fate of a lovelorn low-born maiden.

The decree of death went out. Anarkali was condemned to be buried alive inside a wall of bricks. The edict brooked no delay and the grisly task of slow execution began within minutes of the issuing of the royal orders. Anarkali was taken to a wild place about four miles from the fort, made to stand on a certain spot, and quick-handed masons set to work to build a wall around her person. When Salim came to know of the verdict and its immediate implementation, he broke out of his detention, jumped on to his horse and rode hard to the place of execution. Every yard that his magnificent charger covered to carry him nearer to his Anarkali also added another row of bricks around the still breathing but heart-stricken girl. Her life was being measured out by the swiftly rising wall while his lover was galloping to rescue her. Tne masons, working under the whip of unsmiling guards, won. The Prince and his brave panting horse lost. Anarkali was already entombed when Salim arrived at the spot. This is said to have happened in 1599.

That Salim's love for Anarkali was genuine and far from a transitory gust of passion is borne out by the fact that in 1615, ten years after ascending the throne as Jahangir, he erected an impressive mausoleum on her grave. The passing fancy of a carefree play-prince could not have lasted 16 years, nor would it have made the emperor inscribe on the sides of the sarcophagus his own moving couplet:

Tà qiàmat shukr goim kirdgàr-i-khésh rà
Ah! gar man bàz binam ru-i-yàr-i-khésh rà

(Ah! could I look again at the face of my beloved I would render thanks to my Maker until the day of resurrection)

and signed it with the words "Majnun Salim Akbar" (the love-maddened Salim, son of Akbar). The signature mirrors the depth of his soul. He calls himself, not by the imperial title of Jahangir, but by his boyhood name, Salim, which Anarkali had known and pronounced in accents of love mingled with awe and which must have been on her lips when the coping brick shut her off from the living world of the royal prince for whom she had lived and died.

The superstructure raised over Anarkali's sepulchre on Jahangir's orders was immense in size and imposing in its girth. The sarcophagus was made of a block of pure marble of extraordinary beauty and such exquisite workmanship that over 200 years later an English administrator (Eastwick) called it "one of the finest pieces of carving in the world". The building was circular in shape and roofed by a vast and lofty dome, supported inside by eight massive arches. The edifice was the last compliment paid by Salim to his first and purest love.

In Mughal times the mausoleum was surrounded by extensive gardens, the Ravi flowed by its walls, and a number of beautiful buildings were attached to it. The Afghan devastation of the Punjab in the eighteenth century took its toll, and the gardens dried up and the buildings crumbled. When Ranjit Singh came to power in Lahore, the complex was first occupied by his heir-apparent, Kharak Singh, and then given over to Ventura, an Italian adventurer who had enlisted as a general in the Sikh army. Next to it lay the handsome house of Allard, the French military adviser to the Lahore Court. In front of it was a parade ground where the Sikh armies trained and around which they had their living quarters. After the British annexation the area served as their cantonment, but in 1851-52 the military establishment was moved to Mian Mir across the canal.

Aptly, Anarkali's tomb was first put to a religious use when the British turned it into a Protestant church, and

christened it "St. James's Church, Anarkali". At this time Anarkali's body was exhumed and buried under one of the turrets of the building. The marble sarcophagus was also removed and locked up in a side chamber. Later the Punjab government built a sprawling secretariat around the mausoleum. The independent Pakistan and its rulers have not been interested in the building, and it continues to this day to serve as one of the hundreds of offices in which clerks sit and move files and chatter and sip tea and smoke cigarettes.

When Prince Sher Singh was living with his father in the Lahore fort before the accession of Batala to his dominions the Sikh army's major cantonment in Lahore was situated in the vicinity of Anarkali's tomb. The presence of soldiers always brings prostitutes in its wake. Soon after the establishment of the military headquarters many women of easy virtue arrived and made their homes and business premises in a nearby street, which in time came to be called the Anarkali Bazaar, and later simply Anarkali. Soon afterwards it developed into a general shopping mart, and within a few years into the biggest and the most popular shopping centre for the middle and upper-middle classes of Lahore. Its geographical location assured its primacy. Lying between the walled city and the expanding civil station and within walking distance from the district headquarters, the provincial secretariat, the largest hospital and the fashionable Mall, it had no rivals. It was only in the 1970s and 1980s, when the city overgrew itself and swelled into impossible dimensions, that comparable markets were built in Gulberg and other outlying areas. But the jostling crowds of shoppers and the well-stocked shops of Anarkali still give it a unique flavour and make it the oldest fashionable shopping street in the country.

Whatever the dimensions of truth in the Salim-Anarkali story as it has reached us, the tragic romance plucks at the heartstrings of all Lahoris; and the reflective among them

hear beneath the tumult of the Anarkali bazaar the shrieks of a dying girl, and wonder if it is proper to remember the tragedy of the snuffing out of a supreme love through a bleak, dirty office and a market of dishonest shopkeepers, and will go on wondering till they die and are buried in a grave which will in a few years be bulldozed to form the floor of a modern bungalow or more likely the basement of an ugly shopping plaza.

Coming back to Sher Singh, he paid occasional visits to the Anarkali cantonment to inspect his troops and take the salute on ceremonial occasions. The name Anarkali seems to have had some appeal for him. We don't know whether he was familiar with the story of the girl buried there and had a sense of history, or the music in her name stirred his soul, or he wanted to duplicate in Batala the grandeur of his father's establishment in Lahore, or some other inscrutable motive made the decision for him. Whatever the reason, when he came to Batala to take charge of its administration he refused to live in the fort at Achli Gate which Sada Kaur had used as her official residence.

He built his own palace in a pseudo-Italianate style of architecture, and gave it the name of Anarkali. It was erected near the great tank which Shamsher Khan had built in Akbar's reign. (How ironic and also instructive that Akbar's and Anarkali's names should thus come together again after 222 years to shame Akbar's soul!). The residence was an imposing pile, and commanded a fine view of the country around. A small lake was added to it. The old Mughal garden around the tank was renovated and re-quartered. Sher Singh gave the final and the most moving historical touch by planting a large number of pomegranate trees in and around it.

It is a happy thought for me to recall that my town thus chose to remember Anarkali with spontaneous affection and royal dignity.

Sher Singh lived almost entirely in Batala for 21 years, from 1820 when the town was transferred to his control till January 1841 when he succeeded to the throne of the Punjab. He converted Shamsher Khan's mosque placed in the centre of the great tank into a pavilion. He hunted in Kahnuwan, and his shooting baradari (pavilion) in the swamp stood intact till about 1880. He made plans for converting a large tract round Batala and between Batala and Kahnuwan into a kind of a new forest, but the plan remained unfulfilled. The Anarkali palace was later leased for 99 years to the Church Missionary Society of Batala.

Maharaja Ranjit Singh died on 27 June 1839, and was succeeded by his eldest son, Kharak Singh, an imbecile who died in the following year and was succeeded by his son Naunihal Singh. The ill-starred new ruler died on the day he came to the throne. He was killed by the fall of a portion of the archway leading to Huzuri Bagh when he was returning after performing the funeral rites of his father. Then Sher Singh of Batala was named sovereign, but Chand Kaur, Kharak Singh's widow and the slain ruler's mother, assumed power. The army disapproved of her action and invited Sher Singh to come to Lahore to be crowned, and on 14 January 1841 Sada Kaur's grandson finally made his way to the throne. But on 15 September 1843 he was assassinated by Ajit Singh, the leader of the Sindhianwala band. Thus one Sikh ruler replaced another in quick succession till on 29 March 1848 the last of them, Dalip Singh, was deposed by the British after the bloody battle of Chillinawala of 13 January of that year.

During the second Sikh War of 1847-48, the Rangar Nangal sardar, Arjun Singh, had joined in Batala the main Sikh army, and his soldiers had held the town fort against the British for some time. But General Wheeler defeated them. The fort was dismantled and the sardar's house was blown up on 15 October 1848.

DESCRIPTION OF THE TOWN

The history of Batala which I have summarized above left many marks on the buildings, configuration and people of the town. A physical and social description of the place, to which I now turn, will demonstrate the happy burden of the past which it bore with pride, and the mixing of the peoples who had arrived from various places at different times and let the weaver of Time use them as the warp and woof of the tapestry that was the population of Batala.

The physical development of Batala received the first major fillip when Shamsher Khan was appointed its governor by Emperor Akbar. Historians of the Punjab call him by different titles: Sujan Rai by Khwajasara, Ganesh Das by Kokaltash, Buté Shah simply by Rajput. Called by whatever honorifics, he was the *karori* of the town and the tract surrounding it. Whether he was a Rajput or something else does not matter. What does matter was that the Mughal spirit and taste for beautifying a place moved his heart and mind. On a small scale and within his resources of cash and trained manpower he turned Batala into a little imperial paradise dotted with gardens, tanks, pavilions, mosques and mansions.

In the north-east of the town he laid out a garden. Next to the garden he built a tank of majestic proportions, and in the centre of this reservoir he created a mosque. On the southern bank of the tank he built his own tomb, with a slab on its door carrying the date of its construction: A.H. 999. Locally called *hajira* (after the Persian *hazirah*), it was an octagonal structure. Its tapering walls rested on arches embellished with Persian inscriptions, and the lower surfaces of its domed ceiling were covered with beautifully calligraphed verses from the Quran. A large slab of stone recorded the history of these constructions: the work on the garden, the tank and the mosque began on 25 Safar A.H. 997 and was completed on 15 Ramazan A.H. 998.

Later the Sikhs put Shamsher Khan's works of art to different uses. Sher Singh built his palace "Anarkali" in the middle of the garden, and turned the mosque standing in the centre of the tank into a pavilion (small water palace) which he used as a *baradari* in which to relax and spend his summer evenings and winter mid-mornings. Sher Singh's palace was taken over by the British and given to the local missionary society which housed in it the Baring Union Christian School (later College).

Shamsher Khan's good deeds survived him, and soon after his death his *hazirah* or sepulchre became a centre of popular attraction. With time his piety became legendary. Crowds of people visited the building like pilgrims coming to a sacred fount of knowledge, and many of them left the records of their visit in graffiti in ink on the walls, often giving their names, places from which they came, profession, parentage and dates. These inscriptions written in the Persian *shikasta* script showed that while most of the visitors belonged to the town or to the areas lying north of it some came from the neighbouring hills and from across the Ravi on the west and the Beas on the east. The stream of devotees or medieval tourists flowed uninterrupted through the reigns of Jahangir, Shahjahan, Aurungzeb and his successors. Neither the disturbed conditions under the Sikhs nor the disciplined administration under the British discouraged the practice.

In the words of a modern Indian Sikh historian (J. S. Grewal) "the *hazirah* of Shamsher Khan thus became a focus of sentiments and feelings of a considerable number of people. Some of them have expressed their choicest sentiments in language borrowed from great poets; some others have made their own modest attempt at self-expression; and a few of them have given vent to their personal or sectarian differences. The unlettered thousands who visited the *hazirah* to make psychological adjustment

with their hopes and fears have left no tangible record behind them. Only the educated, belonging largely to the middling social strata, had the additional satisfaction of 'immortalizing' their emotions with indelible ink, making the *hazirah* a mirror as it were to much of the emotional life of the educated Muslims of the times".

Other Mughal officials made their own contributions to the development and improvement of the town. In the 12th. year of Aurungzeb's reign (1670) Mirza Muhammad Khan built a paved bazaar with shops on either side of it. My great grandmother, grandparents, parents and I myself were destined to live in this bazaar from 1876 to 1947. Qazi Abdul Hayee (or probably Abdul Haq) is said to have constructed the Friday mosque, but it is not clear whether he built it for the first time or renovated, extended or rebuilt an already-existing mosque. But there is no doubt that in the early years of Aurungzeb's reign the "big" Friday mosque was in existence and use, as contemporary documents refer to it as the "*jami' masjid kalan*" (*kalan*=big or principal). The Qazi also put up a caravanserai, a bazaar and several other buildings of stone. Amar Singh, the *qanungo*, laid out a 3-terraced garden adjoining the Shamsher Khan tank in imitation of the Shalimar Garden of Lahore. Gangadhar constructed a well and a step-well (*baoli*) and made another garden. Some other khatri wealthy families were responsible for more tanks and gardens around the town.

No other town of this size in India, and only a few of any size, could boast of a necklace of gardens around its boundary wall. At the end of all these labours of love Batala must have looked a reflection, however pale, of Timur's Samarqand.

Batala was by no means an exclusively Muslim town. Even during the Mughal period a large number of Hindus of various castes arrived in the town and settled there: the names of the Hindu *mohallas* confirm this. The Bhandaris

came in Akbar's time. The Puris, the Khoslas and the Dhirs were there before Akbar died. By the early eighteenth century the Ohris, the Sekharis and the Chawinda Khatris had made it their home. The Khatris had over 30 of their sub-castes among the Hindu inhabitants; the best known being Bhandari, Bedi, Dhir, Khanna, Ohri, Puri and Sahni (some of them giving their name to the locality where they settled). The majority of them were shopkeepers, traders and moneylenders, and owned much residential and commercial property. There were Brahmins, too, and in no small number, and many of them were *bhats*, *prohits* and *pandahs*.

But the Muslims always made up the majority of the town's population. The ulema and the Sayyids settled here in Akbar's reign, mainly under the patronage of Shamsher Khan. The Emperor himself gave a *jagir* of one lakh to Muhammad Shah alias Mauj Darya, a Bukhari sayyid, in the *pargana* of Batala; the grant was used, at least in part, to maintain a free kitchen in the town. Mauj Darya's *takia* or *langarkhana* was situated outside the Thatiari Gate. Several other revenue-free lands were granted by Akbar and Jahangir to the ulema and holy men of the town.

Such generosity attracted several doctors of religion to the town. By the end of the seventeenth century the town and the *pargana* had become, in Sujjan Rai's phrase, "the sleeping place" of many saints; the best known of them being Shah Shihabuddin Bukhari, Shah Ismail, Shah Ni'matullah, Shaikh Ilahdad and Shah Badruddin. Shihabuddin was buried in Mohalla Bukharian, and Shah Ismail in Qazi Hatti adjacent to a mosque. Aurungzeb conferred a daily allowance on the Friday mosque which continued to be received till the end of Mughal rule. In 1735 Emperor Muhammad Shah bestowed one hundred gold coins upon Salih Bano, a woman of Batala reputed for her saintliness. Emperor Farrukhsiyar granted a large tract of revenue-free land to the *khanqah* and *madrasa* of Shaikh Faziluddin. This man merits some notice.

Shaikh Abul Farj Muhammad Faziluddin was the son of Sayyid Muhammad Inayatullah who was the *qazi* of Sialkot in the reigns of Shahjahan and Aurungzeb. He came to Batala at the age of 20, wrote 40 books and tracts, and died in A.H. 1151. He had bought several *havelis*, founded a *madrasa* and built several mosques. His settlement in the eastern part of the town came to be known as Mohalla Mian Sahiban, and his descendants lived there till 1947. Ahmad Shah, the historian, was one of his direct descendants. The family was patronized by the Sikhs as well. The British did not neglect it, and gave it a piece of land in the neighbouring village of Umarpur. Among the other Sayyids, the Hamadanis had probably come to Batala even earlier than the Bukharis and the Qadris.

Other Muslim groups are reported to have occupied their homes in Batala in the eighteenth century and onwards. Some Pathan families congregated in the Mohalla Shaikh-ul-Mashaikh. The Kakkezais spread themselves around, living in extended family groups inside the Thatiari, Hathi and Kapuri Gates, in the Tibba, and a few other places. Some of them were landowners, but the majority earned its living from serving as headmen of vegetable and fruit markets and as gold workers in silk. In the eighteenth century one Ghulam Rasul Kakkezai was purchasing a lot of land. The Kakkezais were not as rich as the Khatris but some of them were quite well off. In the third quarter of the nineteenth century a Kakkezai, Murad Ali, built a small mosque for public worship in the bazaar between the Hathi Gate and the Tibba. A few Khojas had settled in the town in the early part of the eighteenth century, lived in Hamadani and Bukhari Mohallas, and maintained themselves by trade and shopkeeping. The *khaiibs*, professionals who delivered sermons in mosques, confined their residences to Mohalla Khatiban.

Batala had been founded by a Rajput, and this connection between the Rajputs and the town subsisted. Shamsher Khan,

the first beautifier of Batala, was a Rajput. A family of Rajput Muslims gained some prominence in the early nineteenth century when Prince Sher Singh chose one Mian Din Muhammad to look after his finances. The street in which he lived later came to be known as Kucha (Lane of) Din Muhammad. His son, Mian Husain Bakhsh, served as an Extra Assistant Commissioner under the British and in 1901 was made an honorary magistrate of Batala. His two sons made Batala famous: Sir Fazl-i-Husain, one of the ablest Muslim leaders in India and the founding father of the Punjab National Unionist Party, and Khan Bahadur Afzal Husain, the Principal of the Punjab Agricultural College, Lyallpur, and the most competent vice-chancellor the University of the Punjab ever had. The graveyard of the family was situated outside Khajuri Gate. Both had gone to Christ's College, Cambridge, where Afzal Husain had earned a first in natural sciences, probably the first Indian Muslim to win the distinction.

POLITICAL ECONOMY

Batala was located at the heart of one of the most fertile tracts of the province, and its agriculture in cash crops, vegetables and fruits had remained in a flourishing state since its founding. Most of the land was irrigated by wells till modern times, a legacy of the Mughal period. There were numerous market gardens, and much of the land was owned by the Arains who cultivated it themselves. They were interested in improving their holdings, worked hard, and stuck together. The result was that, unlike other places and villages in the area, very little land passed into the hands of the Hindu moneylenders.

These advantages made Batala serve as a market for the agricultural produce of the surrounding countryside. The documents of the eighteenth century contain repeated references to its corn markets (*ghalla mandis*) and the "street of corn-sellers" (*bazaar ghalla-froshan*; *ghalla*=corn). It was

connected with the markets of the smaller towns on all sides. Besides wheat, its market was well known for its *gur* (raw sugar) which came from the countryside rich in the cultivation of sugar cane. In the late nineteenth century Batala sent to Amritsar, among other commodities, sugar, *gur*, paddy, *mash* and wheat (before Amritsar rose to commercial importance these products were exported to Lahore). Amritsar supplied it with its salt, turmeric, cardamom, pepper, caraway seed, cinnamon, dried ginger, rose water, muslin, ink, soap, poppy seed, iron, chillies, and *lois* and *khés*. Through the city of Lahore, Batala was connected with Delhi and Multan, and also with the cities beyond the Indian border on the north-west. For instance, raw silk arrived here from Bukhara.

The staple crop of the Gurdaspur district was sugar cane, and the area under its cultivation was actually and relatively larger than that in any district of the Punjab and in most districts in the United Provinces. The finest quality was grown around Batala, which also yielded the highest out-turn by the acre: it was 1,100 *sérs* in Batala compared to 384 in Pathankot. The produce was exported by rail to the west and south-west of the province and also to Sind. Wheat was grown here as an irrigated crop and was of the soft *vadanak* variety. Cotton was widely sown on irrigated soil. The bulk of the area under *kharif* cultivation was given over to rice, maize, *moth*, *mash* and fodder for cattle (*jowar*). The most important rabi crop was wheat.

The chief varieties of rice grown around the town were: *begami* (a fine white variety), *jhona* (a large coarse-grained staple mainly cultivated on canal lands), *munji* (a coarse red kind), and *sathli* (a very poor quality). Some *basmati* (a fine scented white rice) was grown in some villages near Talibpur Pinduri, but it was rare and not of the highest quality.

The fruits and other trees common to Batala and its suburbs were: *shisham, tut, kikar, bakain, tun, pipal, am, phulahi, jaman, simbal, bér, bohr* and *sirin*.

The names of the crops, fruits and trees with their English and/or scientific equivalents are given below:

Native Name	*English Name*	*Scientific Name*
shisham		Dalburgia sissu
tut	mulberry	
kikar		Acacia arabica
bakain		Melia sempervireus
tun		Cedrela toona
pipal		Ficus religioso
am	mango	
phulahi		Acacia modesta
jaman		Triginum tambolanum
simbal		Bombax deptaphyllum
bér		Zizyphus jujuba
bohr	banian	Ficus indica
sirin		Albizzia lebbek
dhak or phulah		Butea frondosa
mitha		Citrus limetta
chakotra		Citrus medica
alucha		Prunus communis
lasura		Cordia myxa
bahera		Terminalia beleriea
charr		Pongamia glabra
rétha		Spindus detergens
imbli		Antidesma diandrm
jhand		Prosopis spieigera
jaun	barley	Hordeum vulgare
javi	oats	Avena sativa
jhona	rice	Orzya sativa
makki	maize	Zea mays
jowar, chari	shorgum	Audropogon sorghum
bajra	bulrush millet	Pennisetum typhoideum
kangani	Italian millet	Setaria italica

Native Name	*English Name*	*Scientific Name*
china	common millet	Panicum milliaceum
mung	mung bean	Phaseolus mungo
mash	mash beans	Phaseolus radiatus
moth	dew gram	Phaseolus acontifolius
sarson	rape	Brassica comestris
toria	Indian rape	Brassica napus
til	sesamum	Sesamum indicum
alsi	linseed	Linium usitatissimum
senji	Indian clover	Melilotus parviflora

Nor was Batala lacking in quality craftsmen of several kinds. Many of them arrived during Akbar's reign. In the eighteenth century most of them were Muslims; but it is difficult to ascertain whether they had accepted Islam before their arrival or were converted in Batala. Among them were the tailor, the dyer, the potter, the washer man, the tent-maker, the block-maker (*chchapagar*), the barber, the mason, the fisherman, the oil-presser, the water-carrier, the cobbler, the blacksmith, the *saiqalgar*, the *nechaband* (maker of the hubble-bubble) and others. The weavers made a name for the town by their fine work. Their deft workmanship on *susi* and *lungi* cloth made it worth exporting to several distant parts of India. In October 1834, on Ranjit Singh's visit to Batala, Sardar Jawala Singh had presented him with *lungis* and *susis* as *nazar* (gifts given to a superior by an inferior). The *pashmina* and shawls of modest quality were made for home consumption. The town was famous for its leather work, particularly saddlery and shoes. The carpenters were artists of talent, and the best among them took to wood-carving and also perhaps to painting.

The *susi* cloth was used for women's *salwars*. Cotton was the principal ingredient, though in the better variety there was proportionately more silk. Much of it was exported to Amritsar from where it was sent on to Jammu

and other places. White *lois* were imported from Europe and embroidered with coloured raffal yarns, also obtained from Germany. The embroidery was done by hand; the machine-work embroidery did not find favour. The articles had a ready sale in Calcutta and in the United Provinces. An ordinary weaver spent three days to make one *loi*.

An outpost of the Amritsar silk-weaving industry existed in Batala. The different designs of *azarbands* (trouser-strings) were appreciated and were well known. They were made of English thread which was obtained from Amritsar. The workers were mostly women, mainly of the Kakkezai caste; their menfolk carried on the trade in the article through local shops or export.

Over fifty different kinds of ornaments of silver and gold were made by hand in Batala, and the town had a separate *sarrafan* (goldsmiths') bazaar in which every shop was a precious metal establishment. The majority of the craftsmen were Muslims. The ornaments were classified by their religious background or use. Eight of these were Hindu: *chchalla brahma, soné ka bala, patang, bahadarian, pipal vate, kandi, dholna*, and *batwara*; four were Muslim: *bindiyan, dandiyan, taritari* and *baunta*; the rest were common to both communities. Eleven of these articles were for the use of the children: *hasli, baranwali, haikal, paonta, jang baranwali, pipal vate, val, taragi, chand, bindiyan, patang*, and *chchaba*. The others were meant for women. Till the closing years of the nineteenth century silver was in general use, and only the wealthy demanded gold ornaments. But by 1891 the upper middle classes and even some among the middle classes were changing over to gold, believing that silver was only fit for the sweepers and other menials.

Shoes were made by a large mixed community of Sikhs and Muslims; the Hindus refused for religious reasons to touch or work with cowhide. Two kinds of shoes were made: the one plain and the other embroidered with lace

work. The gold thread for the embroidery came from Amritsar. Buffalo leather was used for the soles, cow skin for the uppers, and goat skin for the inside of the shoes.

The only glazed pottery in the district was made in Batala, where the potters, all Muslims, had a long street to themselves called Bazaar Kumharan. The glaze was dark brown, and was a compound of siliceous ironstone (*bura*), carbonate of soda (*sajji*) and borax (*sohaga*). Vessels of ordinary size were turned on the wheel, which was worked by the hand. The larger ones were beaten into shape between a mallet (*thatwa*) and *kanera* (hand-anvil), which was used to provide support from within.

Three kinds of oil were made: *sarson* (mustard), *til* (sesame) and *alsi* (linseed), and were almost entirely used for home consumption. One oil press (*kohlu*) worked by two men or one bullock ground about 22 *sér* in one day. Approximately 10 *sér* of grain yielded 3 and a half *sér* of oil. The refuse, called *khal*, fed the bullocks.

Country soap (*dési saban*) was made in the town on a fairly large scale. *Sajji* was purchased from Amritsar, and the oil used was of *til* and sarson and sometimes *alsi*. A maund of sajji, a maund of oil and a maund of lime were mixed together and left in this state for about a month. Then the substance was heated in a cauldron for four days, and the resulting liquor poured into another receptacle, where it was allowed to harden.

Woodwork of many varieties was carried on by craftsmen of different skills. Spinning wheels, *piras, palkis, dolas*, combs and shuttles were manufactured. Carving was done for the rich. Owners of large houses wanted a carved lintel to the *deoris* (entrance halls), a set of *pinjra* work panels above the doorways, finely carved and studded doors, carved balconies, and later partly-carved shelves and chairs. Once the deputy commissioner of the district sent a Batala-made carved window-frame in *shisham* wood to the Calcutta

Exhibition, where it gained a medal. The ornament, said the report, was well designed and neatly executed.

There was a considerable demand for bamboo and its manufactures in the town and the surrounding villages. A bamboo bazaar (*bansanwala bazaar*) catered to this need. The thick hollow bamboos were used as poles for the *doli* and the *palki*, for the shafts of *ekkas* (*yakkas*) and *tongas*, for supporting thatching, and for *jafri* and lattice-work. The solid bamboos were converted into poles for beds, lances for the cavalry regiments, and *lathis* for policemen and *chowkidars* (guards). Bamboo was also very widely used for making matting and basket-work, like sieves and cases for holding grain.

To understand the economy and lifestyle of Batala it is necessary here to give some statistics and other relevant information.

The weights and measures in use were as follows:

Gold and grain weight

8 rattis	=	1 masha
12 mashas	=	1 tola
5 tolas	=	1 chchatank
16 chchatank	=	1 sér
2 sér	=	1 vatti or batti
10 sér	=	1 dharhi
40 sér	=	1 man (maund)
1 kacha sér	=	32 tolas
1 kacha man	=	16 sér

Grain measures

1 paropi	=	32 tolas
4 paropis	=	1 topa
4 topas	=	1 pie
50 pies	=	1 mani (8 maunds)

Cloth measures

3 jaus	=	1 ungli (angusht, finger)
3 unglis	=	1 girah
16 girahs	=	1 gaz (yard)

Land measures

1 and a half gaz	=	1 karam
3 karams	=	1 kan
3 sq. kans	=	1 marla
20 marlas	=	1 kanal
4 kanals	=	1 bigha
8 kanals	=	1 ghumaon
9 kanals and 12 marlas	=	1 acre

The stability of prices and the extent of the low cost of living are reflected in the following table:

Year	Wheat		Barley		Gram		Maize		Jawar		Bajra		Firewood		Salt Lahori		Cotton (uncleaned)			
																	Desi		American	
1	2		3		4		5		6		7		8		9		10		11	
	S	C	S	C	S	C	S	C	S	C	S	C	S	C	S	C	S	C	S	C
1861-1865 Ave.	33	8	44	3	25	6	..		32	0	22	15	106	15	8	14	..		..	
1866-1870 Do.	23	14	20	15	24	6	..		20	11	26	5	108	4	9	0	..		..	
1871-1875 Do.	25	7	34	12	27	10	30	0	27	0	23	0	100	0	9	0	..		..	
1876-1880 Do.	17	2	19	10	22	8	20	5	21	3	16	8	120	0	9	4	..		..	
1881-1885 Do.	27	6	35	7	30	1	28	3	26	14	13	14	120	0	13	2	..		..	
1886-1890 Do.	19	11	25	3	22	7	23	1	19	1	13	8	120	13	13	7	..		..	
1891-1895 Do.	18	9	24	9	23	6	23	0	25	0	19	9	108	0	12	2	..		..	
1896-1900 Do.	13	10	20	3	14	13	17	11	16	6	8	6	104	0	14	6	..		..	
1901-1905 Do.	16	5	24	6	21	6	23	12	24	0	..		92	0	13	10	..		..	
1906-1910 Do.	11	13	15	0	13	6	14	9	12	6	..		72	0	21	8	..		..	
1911-1915 Do.	13	17	0	14	8	0	4	6	0	13	6	0	60	0	24	0	..		..	
1916-1920 Do.	8	4	10	5	8	11	10	11	9	3	..		54	0	10	0	..		..	
1921	7	4	10	0	6	8	10	0	8	0	..		42	0	12	0	..		..	
1922	4	0	6	0	4	12	6	0	3	12	..		40	0	12	0			..	
1923	10	0	12	0	10	8	12	8	6	8	..		45	0	14	0	..		..	
1924	12	8	15	0	11	8	15	0	9	0	..		40	0	10	0	..		..	
1925	8	4	11	0	11	0	10	0	10	0	..		42	0	16	0	5	8	..	

Year	Wheat		Barley		Gram		Maize		Jawar		Bajra		Firewood		Salt Lahori		Cotton (uncleaned) Desi		Cotton (uncleaned) American	
1	2		3		4		5		6		7		8		9		10		11	
1926	6	8	9	0	7	8	7	8	..		..		42	0	14	0	5	0	..	
1927	8	4	11	8	8	0	10	12	6	8	..		42	0	14	0	4	0	..	
1928	8	12	12	0	8	0	11	8	7	0	..		42	0	16	0	3	0	..	
1929	6	4	7	8	7	0	7	4	9	0	..		45	0	16	0	5	0	..	
1930	8	12	11	0	7	0	11	0	8	0	..		45	0	16	0	9	0	..	
1931	20	0	30	0	14	0	29	0	15	0	..		55	0	16	0	..		..	
1932	16	8	16	8	14	8	21	0	..		..		65	0	13	8	6	8	..	
1933																				
1934																				
1935																				
1936																				
1937																				
1938																				
1939																				
1940																				
1941																				
1942																				

To grasp the cost of living in about the time my family moved from Kahnuwan to Batala, notice the prices of some of the essential foodstuffs and firewood, things required by every household. One rupee purchased:

wheat	18 sér and 8 chchatank
rice	18 sér
refined sugar	3 sér
ghi	1 sér and 7 chchatank
firewood	100 sér

The daily wages of labour were:

skilled	9 annas 4 pies to 6 annas 6 pies
unskilled	4 annas 6 pies to 3 annas

COMMUNICATIONS

Economy and trade depended on distances and communications. The principal roads connecting Batala with other important towns within the district ran as follows (in miles):

Batala to Gurdaspur	20
Batala to Pathankot	43
Batala to Dera Nanak	18
Batala to Dinanagar	28
Batala to Sujjanpur	44
Batala to Madhopur	47
Batala to Kalanaur	15
Batala to Bhet ferry	20 (for Hoshiarpur)
Batala to Kahnuwan	17
Batala to Fatehgarh	18

Work on the Amritsar-Pathankot railway, the first provincial work of the kind undertaken by the Government of the Punjab, was begun in 1882 and completed in 1884. Starting from Amritsar, the stations and the distances between them were as follows (in miles):

Vérka	6
Kathu Nangal	12
Jaintipur	18
Batala	24
Chhina	32
Dhariwal	36
Sohal	38
Gurdaspur	44 and a half
Dinanagar	51 and a quarter
Jhako Ladhri	56
Sarna	61 and three quarters
Pathankot	66 and a quarter

CLIMATE

Batala lay on the north latitude 31° 49′ and east longitude 75° 15, 900 feet above sea level. The climate was moderate because of the vicinity of the hills. In summer the maximum temperature in June was 100-102 F, and the mean 93, and in

July 95-100 and 89 respectively. The cold was considerable, and in December the maximum temperature was 65-68 F and the minimum 50-58 F, with the mean at 59 F.

The rains came generously. Between October and January the average rainfall was 1.7 inches, between January and April 4.4 inches, and between April and October 25 inches; the annual average working out to a stable 30 inches.

CANALS

At Shahpur two large canals issued forth from the Ravi and both were called Hasli. One of these commonly called Shahnahar ran up to the suburbs of Lahore and supplied water to the Shalimar garden. The other flowed past Pathankot, Dinanagar, Kalanaur and Batala. In Batala it missed the town narrowly and flowed on its north, a short way from Teli Gate, and between the town and its two main communication lines: Amritsar-Pathankot road and the railway track.

POPULATION

At the end of the Sikh rule about 25,000 persons lived in Batala, of whom nearly three-fifths were Muslims; these figures and proportions remained unchanged till 1881. In the first quarter of the eighteenth century the total population had been between 15,000 and 20,000, with Muslims numbering at least half of it; and this rough estimate was retained by the town for the next 150 years.

THE MILIEU

How did these people arrange the physical surroundings in which they lived? Or, rather, how did history and migration impart an order to the town?

A new wall had been built around the medieval town in the reign of Emperor Muhammad Shah, but climate, disturbed times and frequent warfare had destroyed much of it. A new

wall was put around it in the 1880s, pierced by ten gates: Teli, Khajuri, Pahari, Kapuri, Mian Sahib (or Nasirul Haq), Achli, Hathi (or Fili), Thatiari, Bhandari, and Ohri; and two *moris* or minor entries: Purian between Khajuri and Pahari Gates, and Qazi between Hathi and Thatiari gates.

All the entrances retained their pre-British positions and names; they reflected the march of time and the settlements of certain sects or professional groups.

The Teli Gate had been occupied a long time ago by the oil-pressers (*tél*=oil). Khajuri Gate was probably named after gardens or clusters of date palms which had existed outside it in medieval days (*khajur*=date). The Pahari Gate might have been named thus because it was placed on that side of the town which looked towards the 30-mile away mountains (*pahar*=mountain). The Kapuri Gate may have been the first home of the Kapuris, though in recent years the Sekhrians had a *mohalla* to themselves inside the gate. The Mian Sahib Gate gave entry to the *havelis, dargahs*, tombs and *madrasas* of the family of Shaikh Faziluddin and Mian Nasirul Haq. The Achli Gate was named after the village of Achal, about two miles from the town, where a decisive battle was fought during Sikh rule.

Hathi or Fili Gate (both mean of or for the elephant) owed its name to history. When Sada Kaur's fort was located outside the Achli Gate, Sher Singh used to visit the town on an elephant. To let the animal pass into the town the neighbouring gate was built higher than the others, and came to be known as the Hathi Gate; because of its height, it was also called Bara Darwaza (*bara*=big) or in Punjabi *Wadda Darwaza* (*wadda*=big). The Thatiari Gate speaks for itself: it protected the *thatiars* (makers of copper utensils and vessels) from external dangers The Bhandari and Ohri Gates touched, respectively, the Bhandari and Ohri quarters. Of the two *moris*, the Purian Mori led to the Purian Mohalla, and the Qazi Mori to the Qazian Mohalla.

A few professional groups lived outside the wall, most of them between the Teli Gate and the railway station. The cobblers and water-carriers were known to have lived in the past on the road connecting the Teli Gate with the caravanserai. All the gardens, caravanserais, fortresses, *takias*, Muslim graveyards, Hindu *samadhis*, cremation grounds, a few temples and the Muslim *idgah* lay outside the wall.

On the periphery of the town, but within the wall, there were several kots or walled localities: Kot Mahesa, Kot Faziluddin, Kot Jaimal Singh, Kot Nihal Chand, Kot Jodh Rai, Kot Awalan, etc. The main markets and shopping centres were the Chakri, the Bazaar-i-Kalan or Bara Bazaar (the high street), Qazi Hatti, Sarrafan Bazaar (goldsmiths' street), the Tibba (the mound), and the Ohri Chowk.

The two main bazaars, Chakri and Bara, divided the town itself into three parts. The Chakri, which started at the Teli Gate in the north-west and ran through the Tibba up to the Hathi Gate in the south-east, split the town roughly into two halves, the western and the eastern. The Bara Bazaar, which had its beginning at the Khajuri Gate in the north and after a sharp left turn to avoid a mosque ended at the Achli Gate in the south-east, encompassed the eastern or right-hand portion of the town.

This eastern territory contained the mohallas of the Dhirs, the Puris, the Sekharis and the Pandhis (all Hindu), the Kot Mahesa, Kucha Din Muhammad, Kot Faziluddin, and Mian Mohalla (all Muslim). The long narrow strip lying between the Chakri and the Bara Bazaar contained within itself the old fortress, the old *mandavi*, Qazi Hatti, the Friday mosque, the Shah Ismail Khanqah, the Barara Mohalla, the Soni Mohalla, Khanda Khola, Muftian Mohalla, and Kot Jaimal Singh. The rest of the town to the west of the Chakri, which made up about one-third of the entire walled territory, contained Hamdanian Mohalla, Julkian Mohalla, Ohrian Mohalla, Bhandarian Mohalla, Misran Mohalla, Mohalla Shaikh-ul-

Mashaikh, Bukharian Mohalla, Khatiban Mohalla, Multanian Mohalla, Kaddan Mohalla, Kot Nihal Chand, Kot Jodh Rai, and Kot Awalan. The old fortress, which lay roughly at the centre of the town, had probably served as the nucleus of the settlement. There is no doubt that this area contained some of the oldest features and *mohallas* of the town, like the Friday mosque, Qazi Hatti, Shah Ismail Khanqah, Puri Mohalla and Hamadani Mohalla.

A glance at the names of the mohallas shows that the town was divided into Hindu and Muslim localities. There were a few odd houses of one community in the midst of another, but the general pattern was one of communal segregation.

The religious buildings of the town deserve a look. The *thakurdawaras* preponderated among the temples, and those dedicated to the Vaishnava deities, Rama and Krishna, were more conspicuous. The better-known or more impressive temples included those of Bawa Lal between the Ohri Gate and the Ohri Chowk, of Rai Krishan Chand near the Bhandari Gate, and of the Sekharis in Bara Bazaar in Mohalla Dhiran.

Besides the idols in the central shrines, nearly all the nineteenth-century Vaishnava temples had frescoes on their walls, but their themes were confined neither to Rama and Sita, nor to Krishna and Radha, nor even to the Vaishnava deities. The Rai Krishan Chand temple had several scenes from the Ramayana and one from the Mahabharata; there was also a portrait of Maharaja Sher Singh, the patron of the builder of the temple. In the Sekhari temple, in addition to some of the usual Vaishnava themes, there were some new motifs, and also portraits of Guru Nanak, Kabir, Tulsidas and Mirabai; some secular scenes represented Shivaji, Maharana Pratap and Ajit Singh.

There were several old mosques. The Friday mosque in Bara Bazaar was the largest and for about 300 years the

only congregational mosque in the town. The Kakkezai mosque lay near the Tibba in the Chakri's extension. The two oldest mosques were the one attached to the *takia* of Shah Ismail at the crossroads of Bara Bazaar and Qazi Hatti and the one in Mian Mohalla. A small but beautiful mosque was situated at the corner where Bara Bazaar swung left towards Achli Gate. It was known as the Sikandar mosque after the name of a contractor who had built or financed it.

The Hamadanis, the Bukharis, the Khojas and some of the Kakkezais were Shia by faith. The Hamadanis and the Bukharis had each their own *imambara* in their respective *mohallas*, from which the two main *tazias* were brought out on the 10th. of Moharram which ended at the *takia* of Mauj Darya outside Thatiari Gate.

By the time my family made its home in Batala the demographic, social and intellectual picture of the town looked like this (casting a glance at it a little before and a little after this period).

In 1868 the town had 27,280 persons, with 14,586 males and 12,694 females. In 1881 the population had come down to 24,281. In 1891 it had again climbed to very nearly the 1868 figure: 27,223, of which 14,065 were males and 13,158 females; there were 17,316 Muslims, 9,559 Hindus, 327 Sikhs, and 21 others. The number of occupied houses was 4,421, with the average number of persons in one house at 6. During the next ten years the inhabitants increased their number by exactly 142, from 27,223 to 27,365; there were now 170 more females and 28 less males: 14,037 males to 13,228 females. Religion-wise, now there were about 500 more Muslims and about the same number less Hindus: 17,876 Muslims to 9,071 Hind::s. The next decade saw the population fall by 935 persons, from 27,365 to 26,430; with 14,180 males and 12,250 females; by religion, now there were 17,253 Muslims, 8,223 Hindus, 686 Sikhs, and 88 Christians, with 180 persons unaccounted for (probably

temporary visitors who were counted in). In 1931, the town had 33,204 persons, of whom 22,323 were Muslims, 9,149 Hindus, 1,327 Sikhs, and 306 Christians.

At one glance and ignoring tiny sects and temporary residents or visitors the demographic configuration between 1868 and 1931 was:

Year	*Total*	*Males*	*Females*	*Muslims*	*Hindus*	*Sikhs*	*Christians*
1868	27,280	14,586	12,694				
1881	24,281						
1891	27,223	14,065	13,158	17,316	9,559	327	21
1901	27,365	14,037	13,228	17,876	9,071	1901	
1911	26,430	14,180	12,250	17,253	8,223	686	88
1931	33,204			22,323	9,149	1,327	306

In 1891, there were three schools in the town: the Anglo-Vernacular Middle School, the Christian Baring High School (open to Christian boys only), and the A Lady of England High School (a Christian establishment but admitting non-Christian boys). Three primary schools had been opened soon after the annexation with a view to spreading English education. They fed the AVM school which had been established in 1857. In 1891, AVM had 2 teachers of English, 1 of Persian and Arabic, 1 of Sanskrit, and 2 of mathematics. There were 78 students on the roll, of whom 29 took their final examination and 24 passed. The three primary schools taught 597 pupils. Previous figures for the middle school enrolment were 56 in 1887, 52 in 1888, 68 in 1889, and 76 in 1891. Later it developed into the Municipal Board High School (the municipal committee was established in 1867), and remained till 1947 the only high school situated within the walled city.

The two Christian schools were looked after by the Batala Church Missionary Society which had its headquarters in the town. In 1891 the Society was staffed by 2 Europeans, the Rev. H. U. Weitbrecht, Ph.D., and T.

Coverdale, one native clergyman, three catechists, and four Christian teachers. The town was also occupied by the Church of England Zenana Missionary Society which had been functioning since 1876.

The Church Missionary Society had already in 1850 established special schools in Amritsar for the children of "the higher castes of native Christians", and a girls school in 1852. In 1866 it opened a boys missionary school in Batala. Later the Amritsar missionary school was shifted to Batala and merged with A Lady of England High School. This "Lady of England" was actually one Miss Charlotte Maria Tucker (1821-93), who died in Amritsar on 2 December but was buried in Batala on 5 December. In 1891 the staff of the Zenana society consisted of Miss C. M. Tucker, Miss Beaunan, Miss Dixie (medical) and Miss Key – all British.

The Rev. F. H Baring, on behalf of the Society, opened the Baring High School (which later became a college) on 1 April 1878; it was affiliated to the University of Calcutta in 1880. It was a residential institution, and was housed in the palace built in Anarkali by Maharaja Sher Singh. In 1891 it had a European principal, the Rev. Egerton Corfield, a Headmaster, two graduate teachers and three assistant teachers. The number of pupils in this year was 47, most of them coming from various towns of the province. In later years the school gained considerable reputation as a centre where quality education was imparted with equal attention to its intellectual, social and physical aspects. In its location and setting the school was unique at least in northern India, far superior to the Aitchison Chiefs' College of Lahore.

There were a number of religious "houses" and centres in and around Batala whose existence and influence shaped the town's spiritual and intellectual life and traditions. The Sultanias, who revered Sayyid Ahmad of Sakhi Sarwar of Dera Ghazi Khan, were numerous in parts of Batala. They proceeded to regular pilgrimages to Dhaunkal, near

Wazirabad, and Sakhi Sarwar, thus forging links with the Sufi *khanqahs* and centres outside the town and the district. The leaders of this sect were Sarai jats who were sometimes called Shaikhs. At Masanian, not far from Batala, was the tomb and the shrine of Shaikh Bahauddin Baghdadi who lived in the reign of Akbar, and whose urs was observed each year on 12-13 Rabi-ul-Awwal.

The Bukhari Mohalla was named after Miran Muhammad Shah Mauj-i-Darya Bukhari, a descendant of Jalaluddin Surkhposh. His original home was Uchch, where his ancestors had settled on their migration from Central Asia, but he moved to Lahore where he spent the rest of his life. He was a contemporary of Akbar who held him in high esteem. The saint's biographers claim that the Emperor's success in the conquest of the redoubtable Rajput fort of Chittor was the result of Bukhari's prayers. This demonstration of his spiritual power impressed Akbar so much that he requested the saint to shift his residence to the Mughal capital, Lahore, in order to be near the Emperor. The invitation was accepted, and Akbar granted him several freeholds in Lahore and Batala, along with an annuity of nine lakh rupees. He died in 1604 in Batala where he used to spend a part of every year. His remains were brought to Lahore and buried not far from Anarkali on a road which later came to be known as Edwardes Road but was some years ago rechristened Mauj Darya Road. In Batala a shrine was built in his memory at the spot where his dead body had been washed for burial.

To Batala belonged Shah Abdullah (1745-1824), popularly known as Shah Ghulam Ali, the successor of Mirza Jan-i-Janan Mazhar, the well-known Urdu poet and sufi. His family later moved to Delhi, but he spent his childhood and a part of his youth in Batala. He is the author of *Maqamat-i-Mazhari*, which consists of a biography of Jan-i-Janan, his discourses, teachings, invocations, copies

of the *ta'wiz*, 23 letters of the Mirza, and biographical notes on his disciples.

Nur-ul-'Ain Waqif Batalavi was a prominent poet in the Persian language. A son of Amanatullah, a *qazi* of Batala, he was a pupil of Sirajuddin Ali Khan Arzu and was a friend of Abdul Hakim, the author of *Mardum-i-Didah*. His poetical works were published by the Punjabi Adabi Academy of Lahore. He died in 1785. He was known as *khatim-ush-shu'ara* (the last of the poets). It was in imitation of him that 150 years later Dr. Ashiq Husain put "Batalavi" after his own name.

In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries Batala developed into a centre of Urdu learning. Shaikh Muhammad Faziluddin Qadri (died 1738-39), a scholar and a teacher by profession, was succeeded by his disciple, Shaikh Nuruddin. Faziluddin's son, Shah Ghulam Qadir (died 1762-63), wrote the *masnavi Ramuz-ul-Ishq*. Shah Faqirullah wrote a *masnavi* on the same theme in 1789-90. Another man of Urdu letters was Muhammad Ghaus, but not much is known about him. Mufti Muhammad Bakhsh began to issue his newspaper *Nayyar-i-Azam* from Batala on 22 December 1854; it is not known how long it lasted. The Punjabi poet, Shah Muhammad, who wrote *Jangnama Shah Muhammad* after the death of Maharaja Ranjit Singh, belonged to and lived in Batala.

Batala has produced at least three historians of note during this period. Mian Ahmad Shah, son of Muhammad Shah, was the author of the well-known *Tarikh-i-Hind*. Lala Sujjan Rai Bhandari's name commands the respect of all historians of the Punjab for the scholarship and contemporary detail of his *Khulasat-ut-Tawarikh* and *Khulasat-ul-Makatib*. In the twentieth century another man from Batala, Shaikh Abdul Aziz, was to win renown as a historian of the Mughal royal institutions and the first editor of a true and pure text of Sayyid Waris Shah's *Hir*. He was my father.

Ghulam Ahmad Parwez, editor of *Tulu'-i-Islam* and a radical Islamic thinker of considerable originality, came from Batala. So did Allama Inayatullah Khan Mashriqi, a wrangler from Cambridge, a thinker of note and the Khaksar leader. A family of some distinction was that of Shaikh Ghulam Akbar Khan. The Shaikh himself, though professionally a police officer, had a refined literary sense with a special taste for Persian and Punjabi poetry and an insight into history. He had the rare good fortune of begetting and rearing at least three sons out of six in his own image: Dr. Ashiq Husain Batalavi, man of letters, editor and historian; Agha Babur, one of the finest Urdu prose writers; and Ejaz Batalavi, a prominent lawyer, poet, and prose writer. The outstanding Urdu littérateur Mumtaz Mufti also belonged to Batala.

Batala also made a notable contribution to the public and political life of the province and of the subcontinent by sending forth men of the calibre of Mian Sir Fazl-i-Husain, Khan Bahadur Mian Afzal Husain, and Nawab Maula Bakhsh. I have already mentioned Inayatullah Mashriqi.

Among the Hindu shrines the most significant were the Baragi Dhianpur shrine in Batala, which was founded by Baba Lal Dyal who flourished in the seventeenth century and was a friend of Dara Shikoh; and the *shiwalas* of Achleshwar at Achal which boasted of a fine tank constructed by Rani Sada Kaur and kept in good repair by the Bhandaris of Batala.

SOCIAL STRATIFICATION

To a great extent, the social life and communal intercourse revolved round the castes and occupations of the people. Next to the great religious divide, these determined a man's and his family's place and destiny in life. Figures about the town of Batala are not available, but information on the district level supplies a reliable indicator of the probable state of affairs in Batala.

In the Gurdaspur district as a whole there were in 1901 four principal agricultural castes, with their strength in parentheses: jats (143,000), rajputs (80,000), arains (64,000), and gujjars (49,000). The two main commercial groups were both Hindu: khatris (17,000) and pahari mahajans (14,000). There were 45,000 brahmins. Among the artisan classes, there were 47,000 weavers, 3,500 carpenters, 22,000 potters, 19,000 oil-pressers, and 15,000 cobblers and shoe-makers. Most of the potters and cobblers lived in Batala.

The menials or *kammis* divided themselves into the following groups: sweepers (67,000), water-carriers (39,000), barbers (16,000), washer men (123,000), field labourers and general coolies and leather workers (28,000), makers of articles of bamboo (10,000), weavers (7,000), *mirasis* or village minstrels (31,000), faqirs or mendicants (17,000), and village watchmen and messengers (11,000).

The caste, *biradari* or professional identification of a man was reflected in the title he carried or, more correctly, the word by which he was mentioned or addressed. Some of these are historically and sociologically important because they illustrate both the way in which the members of a multi-religious and multi-caste society dealt with each other and the hierarchical dimensions and refinements which drew the class contours of the society, and thus governed everyday behaviour, social stratification, class barriers, communal distinctions, and the status and honour of an individual and his family. They put each man in his place.

Caste or Biradari	*Way of Address in Use*
Rajput (high class)	Mianji (Muslim); Thakurji (Hindu)
Rajput (low class)	Chaudhriji
Pathan	Khan Sahib; Chaudhriji
Jat	Sardar Sahib (Muslim and Sikh); Chaudhriji (universal)
Brahmin	Panditji, Mahantji, Diwanji, Prohatji
Khatri	Lalaji, Shahji, Diwanji

Caste or Biradari	*Way of Address in Use*
Bedi	Bawaji
Bania	Lalaji, Shahji, Sahukarji
Gujjar	Chaudhriji
Mughal	Mirza Sahib
Sayyid	Shahji, Shah Sahib
Kakkezai	Shaikhji, Shaikh Sahib, Khan Sahib
Khoja shopkeepers	Shaikhji

The suffix *ji* is the equivalent of the Persian (and later Anglo-Indian) sahib (pronounced as *saab* in Punjabi), and shows respect or conventional propriety.

THE *TAHSIL* OF BATALA

On all the four sides of Batala town lay the *tahsil* of Batala, and some mention of this rural hinterland is essential in order to place the town in its context, and to understand the geographical and commercial links between the town and the source of its supplies. There is another vital consideration in this treatment. Many families of Batala had their close or distant relatives still living in several villages within the tahsil. There were frequent visits to and from the town. Girls went out to these villages as brides or were brought into the town as daughters-in-law. Some families owned lands in this territory, which established an unbreakable connection. Then there were some families which had left the village and shifted to Batala during the preceding fifty years or so.

Religion too bound the urban townsman to the rural wides: villagers came to Batala to pay their respects to the Qadri *darbar* of the Mian sahibs, the Bukhari shrine, the Bhandari temples, the *hazira* of Shamsher Khan, the Guru Nanak *gurdawara*, and so on. In return there were several Muslim, Hindu and Sikh historical and traditional centres

in villages like Masanian and Achal which attracted pilgrims from Batala. The town was tied to its surrounding countryside by every value, sentiment and affiliation which made its heart beat.

The *tahsil* of Batala was situated in the Bari Doab, between the Beas and Ravi rivers, and presented the typical features of the sub-montane portions of the Punjab plains.

In 1891 the district of Gurdaspur had four *tahsils*, Batala being the most populous. The total district population numbered 943,922, divided among the *tahsils* in the following strength: Gurdaspur 252,092, Batala 300,644, Pathankot 140,850, and Shakargarh 250,336. In that year, the Batala *tahsil* covered an area of 476 square miles, and contained 263,312 persons living in the villages and only 37,332 in the towns; there were 156,515 Muslims, 92,474 Hindus, 51,088 Sikhs, and 567 Christians There were 482 villages. The density of population per square mile was 632 in the towns and 553 in the villages.

By 1901 the population of the four *tahsils* had not undergone any significant change. Gurdaspur now had 258,379 inhabitants, Batala 305,867, Pathankot 141,623, and Shakargarh 234,465.

Between 1868 and 1931 the population of Batala tahsil had increased by a mere 70,000 persons. In 1868 it was 250,532, in 1881 255,131, in 1901 305,867, in 1921 275,695, in 1931 320,349.

In 1931, the *tahsil* had two towns and 480 villages, with the overall density of population of 672. The number of occupied houses was 61,864. Religion-wise, the population of 320,349 was divided as follows: Muslims 173,212 (with 6,774 literates), Sikhs 95,418 (with 2,880 literates), Hindus 25,914 (with 4,994 literates),and Christians 19,629 (with 390 literates). The rest of the population was made up of ad-Dharmis and Jains.

Among the important landmarks in the *tahsil* were Dera Baba Nanak, Masanian and Achal. The town of Dera Baba

Nanak had been more than once threatened by the Ravi river, and in 1870 the stream had carried away the Tahli Sahib shrine and the sacred *shisham* tree under which Guru Nanak was said to have taken shelter. Masanian was a seat of the Sayyid pirs, and contained a fine mosque with lofty minarets. At Achal there was a temple to Shiva or Achleshwar Maharaja situated in the middle of a tank, and was said to date back to the time of the mythical Kauravas and Pandavas.

Among the villages in the *tahsil* the following (with their 1941 population) were important or had some connection with my family: Aliwal (946), Nurpur (422), Dharamkot (1,624), Bhagowal (3,335), Kastiwal (1,355), Qadian (515), Choranwali (472), Kala Afghanan (3,904), Malakwal (656), Chchachrianwala (1,000), Baddomal Kalan (1,200), Baddomal Khurd (857), and Faizullah Chak.

The overwhelming majority of the population spoke Punjabi, but there were tiny groups who spoke other languages: Urdu (85), Bagri (8), Pashto (4), Sansi (11), Kashmiri (5), English (8), Dogari (13), and Sindhi (10).

AMRITSAR CITY

When my family moved to Batala and in the following twenty years several of its branches migrated to Amritsar. Soon Batala and Amritsar became twin cities for us. Almost every close and distant relative had a connection with Amritsar. Several marriages connected the two places. The short distance between the two facilitated travel and visits. Frequent train service was available and a good road ran between them, fares were low, and people made good use of these conveniences. Amritsar also lay on the way from Batala to Lahore. For some time the Batala *tahsil* had been a part of Amritsar district. Because of these intimate links a brief mention of the city of Amritsar is relevant.

In population the city stood next in the Punjab to Delhi and Lahore. In commercial importance it vied with Delhi, and in

trade it led the province. About six times as large as Batala, it had a population of 151,896 in 1881, 136,766 in 1891, and 162,429 in 1901. The Muslims formed in 1905 the largest single religious group (77,995), very nearly half the population. The Hindus (65,117) came next, followed by the Sikhs (27,860), the Christians (1,104), and a few Jains and Parsis.

In spite of the small Sikh population, the city owed its rise to the Sikh religion. Guru Ram Das first settled near the tank of the Golden Temple in about 1574, and three years later obtained a grant of the site with 500 *bighas* of land from Emperor Akbar. The source of the name is controversial. Some trace the name of the tank to Amar Das, the predecessor of Ram Das. Others claim that the original name was Amritsar itself, "the tank of nectar or immortality". The next guru, Arjun, built the *gurdawara.* Ahmad Shah Abdali and his troops destroyed it, but after his departure in 1762 it was rebuilt and extended. Soon the city became the acknowledged capital of an independent Sikh community. It was under the control of the Bhangi *misal* before Ranjit Singh seized it in 1802. The Maharaja lavished much attention and money on improving and decorating the *gurdawara.*

With the establishment of the Sikh Kingdom and the return of peaceful conditions to the Batala-Amritsar tract, though Lahore was the capital, Amritsar became the greatest commercial centre of the Sikh Punjab. The institution of the two large fairs of Baisakhi in April and Diwali in November enhanced its importance. The large gathering of people also encouraged trade and exchange of goods. In 1833 a number of *Kashmiri* weavers, fleeing from their famine-stricken country, settled in Amritsar, founded the shawl industry, and excelled in the quality of their work so much that within a few years their products were in large demand in Hyderabad Deccan, Lucknow, Delhi and the native states of Rajputana. Immediately after the British annexation there were 4,000

looms in the city and the export trade was flourishing. But the Europeans ceased to wear Kashmiri shawls and the industry dwindled to 1,000 looms.

But the shawl manufacturing had done its work well for Amritsar by establishing it as a centre not only of particular industries but of trade in general. Merchants from far away found that it was a mart teeming with customers with taste and money, and caravans from Bukhara, Kabul and Kashmir arrived at fair times. Trade in European goods, which these travelling merchants wanted in exchange for their local wares, sprang up. The shawl-weavers, who were now casting about for employment, found in the carpets of Afghanistan and the silk-work of Bukhara an occupation for their imitative talent and their idle looms. Central Asia was ransacked for choice patterns, a number of wealthy firms pushed the trade with great vigour and enterprise, and the output began to increase in bulk and variety by the beginning of the twentieth century. The carpet industry was established and was a great success.

The silk industry emerged in interesting circumstances. The supply of raw silk from Central Asia was small, and the manufacturers turned to China. The new source was plentiful, and the famous silk rout in the north not too far away. Soon Amritsar began to export to Peshawar and beyond the silk goods which the caravans from Kabul showed her artisans how to make.

The greatest historical and religious site was of course the Golden Temple, the Sistine Chapel of the Sikhs, which made Amritsar the Vatican of the Punjab. It was, and is, a square building with a dome-shaped roof plated with copper gilt. All the walls were of marble, the spoils from Jahangir's tomb, the Shalimar Garden, the Lahore fort, the Badshahi mosque and other Muslim monuments which the Sikh rulers had pillaged and scarred to beautify their shrine. The tank surrounded the temple on all sides, and a broad causeway led

across from the temple itself to the buildings clustered round the tank. These buildings included the temple treasury, a 7-storeyed tower, and a large number of hospices erected by the Sikh chiefs and Sardars for their own accommodation and that of their friends when they came to worship at the temple. Several large halls in the basement served as caravanserais or hostels for the mass of the pilgrims who visited the shrine regularly from places near and far.

The fort of Govindgarh lay to the north-west of the city and close to its walls; it was built by Ranjit Singh in 1805-09. On the north-east was the Ram Bagh, also laid out on the Maharaja's orders. The architectural ornaments of both the gardens were plundered from the Mughal monuments of Lahore.

So much for the habitat of the family; now for the men and women who peopled it.

2

GREAT GRANDFATHER

WAZIRUDDIN: 1800-1872

THE TEN GENERATIONS

The genealogical tree in the possession of my family goes back ten generations including my own, that is to very nearly 400 years, and runs as follows:-

Abdul Baqi	1616-1699
Abdus Shahab	1659-1717
Abdul Wahid	1678-1752
Khalifa Ahmad	1703-1799
Mian Ahmad	1750-1820
Exuddin	1770-1840
Waziruddin	1800-1872
Ghulam Nabi	1852-1926
Abdul Aziz	1884-1970
Khursheed Kamal Aziz	born 1927

It is believed that Abdul Baqi lived during the reign of the Mughal Emperor Jahangir. This may mean any one or

more of several things. The earlier portion of the tree has been lost during its transmission from generation to generation, in which case the family has a longer recorded history. Or, if the Kakkezai origin is taken to be true, the family settled on one or both banks of the Beas in early seventeenth century or at some time before that. There is also the possibility that the family was a local one and was converted to Islam at about this time. These speculations are not really relevant to my purpose; I am not writing a dissertation on the origins of my family, but its story.

MEN AND TIMES: 1750-1850

The recorded or known history of the family begins in the mid-eighteenth century when Mian Ahmad and his wife Sultan Bibi lived in Kahnuwan. Mian Ahmad was born in about 1750 and was the son of Khalifa Ahmad (c. 1703-99). He combined the possession of some agricultural land with proficiency in oriental medicine. In his own and his father's lifetimes the peace of the Punjab was frequently disturbed by the constant and repeated warfare among the local governors appointed by the weakening Mughal court, the rising tide of Sikh nationalism, the marauding visitations of the hated Marathas and the hungry Afghans whose habitual invasion of this fertile land and the resulting spoliation and oppression are reflected in the Punjabi poetry of the century. The fighting was especially cruel because the normal political ambitions were poisoned and given sharper teeth by the existing religious hatred, ethnic enmity and the absence of a strong empire or a powerful overlord capable of creating even a modicum of order amid the rampant anarchy.

Luckily Kahnuwan's geographical situation provided it with relative quiet and general protection against armed attacks or adventuresome forays. Though it was only 17 miles from Batala, it was not situated on the highway

leading up north to Pathankot and further on to Kashmir. It was a quiet small town, near the right bank of the Beas river, whose people lived a contented and simple life, attending to their modest needs, working hard, and not paying much heed to what was happening in the south. The Kahnuwan swamp, though a nuisance in many ways, might have served as a safety belt by keeping out many looters, plunderers and robbers.

Yet, short distances, usable roads, and demands of trade could not allow Kahnuwan the luxury of isolation and self-sufficiency. Batala was not far away, and a good road ran to it. One could get there in 40 minutes on a galloping horse, in less than 90 minutes by tonga, in a little over 2 hours by ox cart, and in about 3 hours on foot. Endemic warfare has one and the only undeniable virtue of improving communications. While the province was being devastated by avaricious and ruthless bands of soldiery, its highways and minor roads were in constant repair. With serviceable roads came a taste for travel. Journeys were undertaken for two main reasons: meeting the family and trading the stock. Amritsar was a large commercial centre, and Batala an important historical place with a reputation for the quality of its religious teaching and its arts of craft. On the other side of the river lay the wide territories which later formed the districts of Hoshiarpur and Jullundher. Much was happening there to attract notice. Kahnuwan formed a part of an extremely fertile tract of land, thanks to the river, the swamp and the nearby hills. Rain was plentiful, and the Bari Doab canal ran by the walls of the town before bifurcating into its two Kasur and Sobran branches. The produce had to be taken to Batala and Amritsar for sale or exchange.

Even those who stayed at home heard of the news of startling events occurring around them. Channels of verbal communication were plentiful. A relative arrived from Mukerian or Kaithan-Dasuha across the Beas and talked of

what was happening there. A revenue official descended on the town from Gurdaspur or Pathankot and brought the news of those places. The visitor from Batala had fascinating things to relate of the Sikh missals fighting among themselves for supremacy, and lo and behold! The tale of a masterful Sikh woman ruling the town with dignity and compassion. A passing traveller from Amritsar carried the reports of what was afoot in the prosperous mart of the region. Such men dropped in from time to time, regaling the Kahnuwanians with tales of many towns and villages and bringing them up to date on military and commercial developments.

Khalifa Ahmad was in his middle age when he heard how on 10 April 1762 Ahmad Shah Durrani had entered Amritsar, despoiled the city, murdered many Hindus and Sikhs, and blown up the great Sikh shrine of Harminder (later the Golden Temple). Mian Ahmad paid a few visits to Batala, and each time he returned home the family and the neighbours heard from his lips the stories of the rise to power of the Sukerchakia *missal*, of Ranjit Singh's occupation of Amritsar (1805), of Mai Sada Kaur's dominion over Batala and her courage in standing up to the Maharaja and the final surrender of the town (1811) forced upon her by the wily and heartless Ranjit Singh.

Mian Ahmad departed this world in about 1820, leaving behind 2 sons and an unrecorded number of daughters: the elder son whom I will call Exuddin (1770-1840) and the younger son who was named Shihabuddin (1775-1845). I must explain why I have christened my great great grandfather Exuddin. The copy of the genealogical tree which my father found among his father's papers after his death had been prepared or copied 50 years earlier. Either it had been deposited in a humid badly-ventilated chamber of which there were many in the havelis of those times, or a perverse stroke of fortune caused some paper-loving insect to alight on the square bearing the name of this gentleman and to stay there

until he had gnawed through or consumed the spot on which the first half of his name was inscribed. What was left and was decipherable informed us that he was called something Din. Such a gap cannot be filled by any human being. My grandfather was dead and the other elders of the family could not help. Instead of calling him the "unknown elder" every time I mention him, I have given him the name of Exuddin. Thus I have salvaged at least one half of his name, and can now refer to him intelligibly. Had I been writing in Urdu or Punjabi, I would have called him "Fulanuddin".

Mian Ahmad's property was divided between Exuddin and Shihabuddin after the daughters had been given their due share. He must have been very well off because when, in about 1825, Shihabuddin and his family migrated to Mukerian for reasons which are unknown, Exuddin bought a good part of his brother's inheritance. The brothers parted in peace and with much regret. Shihabuddin had four sons: Ziauddin, Murad Ali, Fateh Ali and Chiragh Ali. Both Fateh and Chiragh must have lived to a ripe old age as my father, who was born in 1884, remembered having seen them and used to tell me how soft-spoken and long-bearded they had been; he could recall their looks and features and the way they dressed. Shihabuddin bought lands and other property in Mukerian and settled there. He died in about 1845.

Exuddin continued his father's medical practice as well as he supervised the inherited zamindari. Some information about the extent of his holdings is available and testifies to his professionalism as a hakim and his skilful handling of the agricultural land which his father had left. He added much to his legacy from his own income. He lived in a large haveli with commodious rooms and spacious courtyards. It cannot be ascertained whether he built it himself or inherited it from Mian Ahmad or extended and renovated the bequest. He also owned two or three houses of modest size in the town. Outside the town walls he possessed several squares of land

on the income of which depended the affluence of the family. He is said to have been a leading member of the community, and his local status was enhanced by the fact that he built a mosque of some proportions adjoining one of his properties and later added to it a row of hujras or small chambers for the imam and the wayfarers. The income from that particular property was earmarked for the upkeep of the mosque.

After having improved the fortunes of the family to a considerable extent and earned a good name among the townsmen, Exuddin breathed his last in about 1840 at the Biblical age of three score years and ten. His adult life had spanned, almost exactly, the rise and demise of Maharaja Ranjit Singh's kingdom of the Punjab. He had seen Kahnuwan and all the surrounding territory passing into the control of the Maharaja. He had heard of the Sikh armies marching not too far away from his home towards Kashmir and conquering it. As a young man he had visited Batala and witnessed the rule of the first queen north India had produced since Nurjahan, and had recalled the family lore that his own ancestors had assisted the husband of this Nurjahan, Emperor Jahangir, in his hunts in the swamp of Kahnuwan more than two centuries ago.

WAZIRUDDIN

Exuddin had only one son who inherited a more than comfortable patrimony and an opulent lifestyle. This lucky lad, Waziruddin, had been born in about 1800 and was thus in his middle age at the time of his father's death. He was a good hakim, a bit of a spendthrift, and fond of travelling. A few branches of the family, some close and some remote, were living in a half dozen villages scattered in the area between Kahnuwan and Batala and a little farther away. Waziruddin made it a point of honour to pay them regular visits. He had a larger than usual tonga made for these perambulations, in which he would spread his limbs in a recumbent position in

the back seat, his trunk of clothes resting on the floor and serving as a footstool. Sometimes he took his wife with him, and later one or two of his sons. By the standards of those days he travelled in state. The tonga driver perched himself partly on the iron footstep fixed to the fore right-hand side of the vehicle and partly on the edge of the front well. An attendant sat on the floor of the front well, holding an earthen flask (surahi) of water and a katora, to provide an instant drink to the master in the summer months, or a kettle of Kashmiri tea and a china bowl in the cold season. The front seat was left unoccupied. When the family was in transit, there was a procession of three or four tongas with the custom-made model in the lead. The tongas were followed by a yakka which carried, besides the driver, two servants and the luggage. When the visit was a longer one or made for the purpose of attending a wedding, the yakka was replaced by an ox cart which could carry more trunks and other paraphernalia of medieval journeying. The old and the very young and the odd sick passengers lay in comfort on thick mattresses covering the floor of the cart. As the cart's speed of locomotion was about a quarter of the tongas' and the yakkas', it was loaded and sent on its way a few hours earlier. Thus the tortoise and the hare arrived at the destination together.

From these villages day trips could be made to Batala, particularly on the long summer days. Batala was then, as it had been for the last 200 years, a respectable town with paved streets, caravanserais, large havelis, and well demarcated mohallas. A lot of shopping was done. The beautiful shawls made from English lengths and embroidered with German thread by the local artisans, fine thin pottery, carved legs for the bedsteads and cots, silver ornaments, superior variety of cloth for dresses, ink and paper, shoes and lungis, were some of the purchases made. If a wedding was approaching, the shopping list was longer and the trips more frequent. On such occasions Waziruddin preferred to stay in the nearest possible

village from where Batala could be visited on successive days without wasting time or suffering the discomforts of long journeys. He did not allow his family to lodge at a public house or a caravanserai.

The other travelling was in a different direction and brought greater personal satisfaction. His paternal uncle Shihabuddin lived in Mukerian with his four sons. Two cousins, Ghulam Jilani and Ata Jilani, lived in Kaithan-Dasuha with their families, and both were dear to him. Soon he was to marry his two older sons to the two daughters of Ata. There were other uncles and blood relatives who had, in the past one hundred years, left Kahnuwan for Mukerian. It is possible that Waziruddin felt a little lonely in Kahnuwan, particularly after Shihabuddin's departure for Mukerian. Perhaps he was more affectionate by nature than most men and missed his larger family. Whatever the reason may be, blood called to blood and he journeyed often to the east bank of the Beas. He had a trusty manager of his properties in a nephew of his wife and could therefore afford long absences.

Going across the river by a succession of modes of transport might have been a little arduous, particularly for Waziruddin's mother and other people who were old or not in good health, but for most of the travellers, and especially for his sons, it was more diverting and thrilling than the trips to the villages on the Batala side.

It is not difficult to rehearse the particulars of these visits. The family left home in the early hours of the day in a string of vehicles and made its way north-eastwards to the river, past Sathiha and Lodhpur, and arrived in Naushahra in two hours. The river ferry was still one mile away and the caravan took another fifteen minutes to get there. A halt was made at the bank, where the mid-morning meal was taken, the vehicles unloaded and the luggage put in readiness for the boats. The servants stacked the trunks and

holdalls and beddings and whatever else there was in the boats which had been ordered a few days earlier to be available and ready. The men and women stepped into the water transport, the servants bade goodbye and departed for Kahnuwan with express instructions and repeated reminders to come to the ferry station on such and such a day when the family planned to return.

The family ensconced themselves on the banquettes of the boat after covering the boards with thick cushions. The children sat or stood close to them, enjoying the water journey and all the time calculating how far behind they had left one bank and how much nearer the other bank was drawing. The water flowing towards and then way from the boats was a source of fascination and mystery to the little minds. The oscillating and undulating movement did not worry them, nor the tossing and bobbing up and down, nor the pitch and roll. The boys were used to the horseback, either on their own or seated in front of the rider, and were familiar with much faster speed, occasional bumps, and the current of air swishing past them. The girls, though not allowed on the horse except as children, found the sailing not too dissimilar a movement to a tonga ride. Yet it was a new experience to the denizens of *firma terra*.

But sometimes the wind blew stiff and the current flowed swift and the boatman steered badly, and there were moments of panic. The very young gripped the mother's or sister's heavy burqa in their little fingers and some of them began to cry, drowning in their cacophony the sound of the women calling upon God for safety. The teenagers, with their minds set more on adventure than on danger, laughed and shouted and raised derisory cheers at the timidity of their juniors. The glances of the elders rested alternately on the sails of the boat and the burqas of the womenfolk, both dazzling white in the sun and swelling with the wind. Occasionally Waziruddin's favourite mare, which

accompanied him on these travels, was jolted and turned fidgety. The equerry quietened her down, while holding fast to the ropes which bound her to the rafters. These momentary hazards passed quickly, the calm returned, interrupted conversations were resumed, the babies let the burqas go, the mare was quiet, and the boatman pretended to attend more carefully to his job. A few more minutes and the boat slid into the other ferry station. The watery crossing was over.

The family disembarked. The women stepped over the stanchion of the boats with care and affected elegance. The men strode over them lightly. The boys leapt across and ran up the sloping bank. The mare was walked out and led up the incline. The luggage was unloaded. The ferrymen were paid off and thanked.

On the bank stood in welcome the two Jilanis with their sons, uncle Shihabuddin with his four stalwarts ranged beside him, and a few other people who were distantly related to Waziruddin or were close friends. There were many servants, old retainers all of them, two or three tongas, and a few horses and mares on which the not so old had ridden from their villages. The hosts shook by the hand, embraced, hugged and kissed the guests, dispensing their favours in accordance with the recipient's gender and age. After some simultaneous chattering and other spontaneous expressions of pleasure at the meeting, the reunited tribe climbed up to the tongas or swung into the saddles and rode to Mukerian, which lay only 3 or 4 miles away due east, opposite to the ferry station. Dasuha was at a distance of about 10 miles towards the south. The first destination was Mukerian, not because of its proximity but because of its greater attraction. The closest relatives lived here.

In Mukerian the reunion was rollicking fun for everyone. The elders inquired about one another's health, exchanged news, gossiped, arranged matches for the growing boys and

girls, remembered their ancestors, talked of the days gone by and of the joys and sorrows shared in the past, of the growing new generation, and of the mercies of God which came without stint or count (it was a contented society). The young cousins made the best use of the visit. They talked incessantly of everything within their knowledge and experience: relatives, neighbours, friends, visitors, animals, teachers, games, travels. There was so much to relate and pass on, to convey, to discuss, to recall, to quarrel over. The babies crawled all over the place, crying when they were hungry and chuckling when they were not. After a few hours the neighbours called to say hullo, to renew old relationships and friendships, and to complain that the guests came not as often as they should. The haveli, filled with people of all ages, resounded with exuberant gaiety and good cheer. Everyone was so happy, so full of joy, so brimming with affection, so contented to be in the bosom of the family.

Everything in the house was put at the disposal of the uncle, the cousins and the nephews and nieces from Kahnuwan. The water-carrier was on call all day, fetching skinfulls (mashks) from the neighbouring well which was shared by the mohalla and the mosque. Large quantities of fruits and vegetables came from the farm outside the town. Cooking went on almost all day. The honour of the host, as well as of the town, was at stake. Dishes of every kind were prepared. A lot of milk was drunk. The men rode out to the lands and to the neighbouring hamlets. The women indulged in social rounds within the town. The young walked about, looking up their age group and reviving old friendships or making new ones.

After a few days the Waziruddins moved to Kaithan-Dasuha to see the Jilanis and their children. The pleasures of Mukerian were repeated several timers over, because there were many families to visit and stay with. Ghulam Jilani and Ata Jilani lived in the same haveli but in two

different portions separated by a large courtyard and two deep verandas. Waziruddin stayed with both in turn to please them, shifting after a few days from one part to the other. He and his wife liked Ata's two girls and chose them as their future daughters-in-law. Ata Jilani's son, Husain Bakhsh, was in the service of the Raja of Suket. He made it a point to come home on leave when Waziruddin planned to be there, and delighted the Kahnuwanians with tales of court life and the Raja's generosity and the pomp and show of the palaces. He had a captive audience and they say he was a good raconteur, so he kept the family hanging on his words till late in the night. He enthralled the circle with his stories and added to its pleasure by showing everyone the gifts the ruler had bestowed upon him: a curved sword with a jewelled handle, a dagger with the State's monogram engraved on the blade, a necklace encrusted with precious stones, silver anklets, a kals of gold, and so on.

From the Jilanis Waziruddin's family moved to other houses which were more modest in size and comfort but which arranged the same welcome and showed the same pleasure as it had experienced in the big havelis. Once again the talk was about the scattered family, the health of the old, the welfare of everyone, the fertility of the lands, the nicer points of oriental medicine, the recent deaths, the weddings to be arranged, the studies of the children, the number and condition of cattle and horses, and as much of the political news as reached their peaceful countryside.

On the last topic there was much interest and concern because this was the time of a change in the rulership of the Punjab. All the people coming together in these reunions had grown up under the Sikhs and were now growing old under the British. Though they were far from Lahore where the new power had taken control of things, and from the places where the Sikhs had staged their last brave battles against the advancing tide of foreign domination, they

realized that their future as well as that of their children would be determined by the new white officers who were just beginning to appear in small towns and even in isolated and far-off villages accompanied by a band of revenue officials, irrigation engineers and medical staff. Changes beyond anyone's fears or expectations were to materialize before Waziruddin passed away.

At last this round of visits came to an end. The family packed up the trunks which were now heavier with the gifts and presents given by every household it had lived in. Farewells were made with moist eyes, fast and prolonged embraces, firm handshakes, and kisses on both cheeks. Promises were asked and given to get together again soon, wishes were pronounced, and prayers were made for everyone's health and happiness. The caravan moved back to Mukerian, breakfasted at Shihabuddin's house, bade more goodbyes, and embarked on the same old boats to cross the same old river – as its ancestors had done since God knows when – and finally got back to Kahnuwan, laden with happy memories, and also with many regrets on the brevity of these visits and the uncertainty of the coming years.

HIS SONS

In their married life Waziruddin and his wife Zuhra produced four sons (the daughters don't appear in the records).

The eldest was Azizuddin who was born in about 1848, was a poor student and therefore did not finish school, and ended up as a patwari. He married Sharfunnisa, the older daughter of Ata Jilani of Mukerian, in about 1865, and had two sons, Muhammad Husain who was born in 1871 and Akbar Husain who was born in 1879. Around 1880, when he was posted in Batala, he fell in love with a young Pathan Sayyid girl, who must have seen something very attractive in a man in his early thirties, married her against the will of her parents, and established her in his home. Sharfunnisa was

furious, but by this time both her parents were dead, and so was Waziruddin. She refused to live in her husband's home, but where else could she go? Her younger sister, Nurunnisa commonly called just Nur, came to her rescue. Nur had married Azizuddin's younger brother Ghulam Nabi two years before Waziruddin's death, that is about ten years before Sharfunnisa's days were darkened. Ghulam Nabi believed that Sharfo, as she was called, had every reason to call upon him for help. She was his elder sister-in-law (wife's sister), the wife of his elder brother, and a cousin in her own right.

Sharfo was losing her mind with worry about her own future and that of her two young sons. Her ego had been hurt to the quick by Azizuddin's action. She also had a short temper and a sharp tongue. Nur was a different kind of woman: soft of speech, compassionate of heart, even of temper, sympathetic by nature. She knew her sister's foibles and the possible difficulties of living with her. Yet she and Ghulam Nabi, after consulting Zuhra (Waziruddin's widow), took a quick decision. Ghulam Nabi did not complain to his elder brother, not to speak of upbraiding him; this was not done in those days. He sent Nur to his house to fetch Sharfo and his sons, and when they arrived welcomed them, commiserated with them, and told them that they were to stay with him at his expense till the errant Azizuddin mended his ways. Azizuddin did not fulfil this hope. From that moment onwards till her death Sharfo was Ghulam Nabi's responsibility. She lived in his house with her two sons. He brought up and educated her sons, who accompanied him to wherever he was posted, got them jobs, and married them to his own daughters.

Azizuddin and the young light of his love continued to live their own life in Batala. The family's boycott steeled his nerve against mundane problems and increased his devotion to his beautiful bride. Although they had no children, the couple walked in the sunshine of deep love and perfect

understanding, forgetting the world around them and disregarding the family frowns, taunts and gibes. Waziruddin had bought for him a modest 3-storey haveli in Khanda Khola, and Azizuddin and Fazl Bibi lived there till the husband's death in 1924. The moment he died his sons claimed the house for themselves, the older one occupied it, and Ghulam Nabi arranged for the shifting of Fazl Bibi to a smaller house inside Thatiari Gate, opposite the houses which his two younger brothers had built, and appointed two servants, man and wife, to look after her. After Ghulam Nabi's death in 1926, the widow was in charge of his older son, Abdul Aziz, who was my father, till her death in 1939.

Waziruddin's second son was Ghulam Nabi, my grandfather and the maker of the family, to whom I will turn a little later.

The third son was Ghulam Qadir, who was born in 1859. He had just passed out of the high school when Ghulam Nabi was leaving for Banda in the United Provinces. He took his brother with him and, using his influence, got him a revenue appointment in Dodhi, district Mirzapur, where in time he rose to be a tahsildar. He married in about 1884 Piranditti, the eldest child of Shaikh Shamsuddin who was a hakim by profession and belonged to one of the Kakkezai villages around Batala which Waziruddin was in the habit of visiting from Kahnuwan. Ghulam Qadir spent almost the whole of his life in Dodhi, had two daughters and three sons, and returned to Batala on his retirement in 1915. He fell ill early in 1916 and died in the October of the same year in his own small haveli inside Thatiari Gate. He was buried in the family graveyard situated outside the Gate walls. Piranditti survived him by seven years, dividing her time among her father's relatives in Chak Faizullah, her servants in Batala, and her daughter Zainab (my mother) wherever she was.

Waziruddin's youngest son was Ghulam Muhammad, who was born in 1862. His life and career were so closely

entwined with Ghulam Nabi's that the two brothers should be studied together. But first let me bring Waziruddin's life to its close.

This tall, free-spending, smiling, well-dressed squire of Kahnuwan enjoyed his life as long as he lived. He travelled a great deal, gave his affection unreservedly to his relatives, and looked them up regularly even if they were not closely related and lived far away: he was my first ancestor to visit Amritsar and later Lahore. He was also a man of modern ideas, both in his personal life and his social relationships. Fond of dressing well, he was the first man in the family to give up the tahband (or tahmad) in favour of the salwar, and in his later years took to the frock coat which Ranjit Singh's European generals had introduced in the Punjab and later the British had made into the standard official dress for the native gentlemen.

In the 72 years of his life he saw history changing at his doorsteps. He was born when Sada Kaur, the Queen of Batala, was ruling the territory in which Kahnuwan lay. As a young man he heard exciting stories about her strong character and exceptional ability, and himself saw her downfall and surrender under duress to Ranjit Singh. In his twenties he visited Batala and was enchanted with the brand new Italianate palace that Sher Singh had put up and the Anarkali garden he had laid out around it like a necklace of red (pomegranate buds) and green (grass and bushes). In his thirties he heard with a heavy heart of the imprisonment and death of Sada Kaur; not knowing that after his own death one of his sons would own the haveli in Batala in which Sada Kaur was reputed to have lived for some time. In his late forties he found himself a subject of the British empire. In his fifties and sixties, though still living in an out of the way corner of the province and without the benefit of modern education, he took the revolutionary steps of sending his eldest son into government service and the next one to a Christian mission high school. His thoughts flowed parallel

to the currents of change which were overwhelming the Punjabis and transforming their outlook.

He persuaded Azizuddin to go to Batala as a patwari in the late 1850s. On his first visit to Batala to see how his son was doing, he was impressed by the quality of life in the town and was struck by the contrast it offered to the absence of opportunities and creature comforts in Kahnuwan. He was too set in his ways as a zamindar to think of moving to Batala. But he took two decisions which, wittingly or unwittingly, ensured the abandonment of Kahnuwan by his widow and sons. He bought a small haveli for Azizuddin in Khanda Khola, and sent his second son, Ghulam Nabi, to Batala to live with his brother and study at the local English school. All his life Ghulam Nabi blessed the day his father brought him to Batala and enrolled him in the school. The toddler who now trudged to the school with a takhti tucked under his arm and a few books in his hand was to change the history and the fortunes of the family.

Waziruddin himself did not shift to Batala. His lands and havelis and peasants and friends were too close to his heart to let him contemplate a break. Links going back to centuries held him fast to the soil which his ancestors had tilled, bought and owned, and where they all lay buried in their graves. No. Such bonds were beyond his snapping. He would stay here, the place of his birth, with his own people, and roam in his fields and treat his patients and pray in his mosque, and when the hour came die in his bed. He made what was in those days the ultimate sacrifice for the sake of the future of his sons: sent all of them to modern schools to shape their own lives. He was left alone with his wife in his declining years in this huge house. But that would have come about even otherwise, when his sons had married and left him to try their luck elsewhere. He stayed on in Kahnuwan.

In 1866 he arranged the marriage of Azizuddin, took a large wedding party to Kaithan, and presided over the

ceremony of his eldest son's nuptial knot tied to Ata Jilani's elder daughter Sharfunnisa. The entire clan was there, arriving from Amritsar, Batala and its vicinal villages, and Mukerian and Dasuha. For a few days there was much merriment and fun. He had enjoyed his life all his years. His capacity to derive pleasure from family reunions and congenial company had not diminished. He took part in the festivities with the gusto of a young man. After the walima in Kahnuwan, which was a grand affair, Azizuddin departed with his bride to Batala. Five years later, in 1870, he married off his second son, Ghulam Nabi, to Sharfunnisa's younger sister, Nurunnisa. Ghulam Nabi was then a student at the Medical School in Lahore, and after a few days he left his bride in Kahnuwan and returned to Lahore.

Nur, the younger daughter-in-law, brightened Waziruddin's last days. She was a girl of sunny temperament, a sense of humour and a taste for good food. This shy slim girl was after her own heart. He loved her much. The *haveli* once gain resounded to the laughter and chatter of a young voice. Ghulam Nabi came from Lahore when he could to be with his wife. Two grandchildren arrived during the next two years, signalling to Waziruddin that his next generation was on its way to independence. In 1871 Azizuddin had a son, and in 1872 Ghulam Nabi a daughter; both were to marry each other in 1888.

Waziruddin had played his part. It was now time to go. In July 1872 he fell ill, and on 3 August he breathed his last, surrounded by his wife, all the sons, the two daughters-in-law, and as many cousins and nephews and nieces from across the river as could make it. He was buried next to the family mosque, the last of the line to be interred in the ancestral soil. His widow, Zuhra, stayed on in Kahnuwan for a few more years, running the estate with a firm manly hand. And then she decided to move to Batala where she bought one large haveli and two smaller ones, and installed herself

in the largest of them as the head of the family. She lived on well into her nineties, seeing, with her wondering and unbelieving eyes but a glad heart, the tribe increase and multiply, two of her sons bringing much honour to the family, and her grandsons prospering in a variety of professions. Between the day she had married Waziruddin and her end lay not a century of time but, it seemed, several centuries of change. For the family it was a different and an uncharted world in which she died in Batala on 9 December 1916, and was buried in the new family graveyard. She had outlived one of her sons and the two older daughters-in-law.

As my grandfather, father and myself, and some other elders of mine, were deeply influenced by and cast in the mould of Waziruddin, and his modern ideas changed the history of the entire family, his life story deserves to be told in as full a detail as I have heard it from my father and he from his.

Waziruddin's decision to send his second son to school in Batala was taken under two influences. One was his native wit and foresight. He was sensitive to the call of time; he did not expect all his sons to stay in Kahnuwan as petty or big zamindars and practitioners of oriental medicine. The ancestral holdings would be divided on his death, and with each son receiving less than a quarter of the property (there were daughters too to be provided for), the lifestyle of the family was bound to decline. With each succeeding generation the zamindari was fated to decrease and dwindle. The sons must find their own place in the new world, earn their living, move out of Kahnuwan, and look at their inherited wealth as nothing more than a supplementary source of income, an insurance against lean times, and a home to come to in retirement or old age.

The second prompting was even stronger. His first son was born about the time the Punjab passed into British hands. The other three followed in the 14 years during which

the white rulers were consolidating their power and pulling the province into a new era. Every year Waziruddin saw the new administrative machinery striking roots in the acquired area. Revenue officials who came to Kahnuwan and to Lodhpur and Sathia (where the family had properties) had a different bearing. They were better trained, more efficient, more knowledgeable and better disciplined. Two or three times a year an Englishman visited or passed through Kahnuwan. He walked as if he owned the place, Waziruddin used to remark. His staff jumped to his orders. They feared, not him, but his authority. His self-confidence commanded respect. He was not unnecessarily harsh or overbearing. Above all, he was just. The settlement of land and the assessment of revenue were made equitable. What impressed and surprised Waziruddin even more than the Sahib's competence and discipline was his humanity, consideration and understanding.

Once the official work was done with and the shades of evening began to fall, Waziruddin would invite the settlement officer and his senior staff to the haveli, offer them his hospitality, and the company talked of professional matters, of seasons and rains and crops and water distribution and revenue collection. This serious conversation was interspersed with general comments. Waziruddin's curiosity was aroused. He had received a sound traditional education, knew Persian and Arabic, had experienced the last years of Sikh rule and heard a great deal from his father of the days of Maharaja Ranjit Singh. He had been a zamindar for generations and knew all worth knowing about land and the people working on it. He had visited Batala before and after the change of government. He had toured many of the villages around Kahnuwan. He had crossed the Beas and had cousins and several other relatives living in what was now the Hoshiarpur district and its Mukerian tahsil. He knew no English, but the British official

could either manage to express himself in Punjabi or Persian or had a fluent interpreter with him. There was no communication gap, and much inquisitiveness on both sides.

The English official was a typical representative of his imperial race. He belonged to that celebrated band collected by John Lawrence which licked the Punjab into shape, made it into a laboratory of the most innovative measures aimed at placating, controlling and ruling a native population, cultivated the rural squirearchy, befriended the landed gentry, created a feudal aristocracy, and showed a remarkable devotion to the welfare and improvement of the people of the province. He was a member of the famed Punjab school of administration, which, in the span of one generation, subdued, pacified, ruled and trained in local democratic politics the Punjabis of town and country. This could not have been achieved without adding to the arts and technique of rulership the human qualities of sympathy, curiosity, and a capacity for building a relationship with the natives (particularly of the rural territories) which combined authority with mercy and power with humanity. The English official was there to rule, but he wanted to rule well through knowing his subjects intimately and closely, questioning them, observing their way of life from close quarters, living with them for a few days every month, getting a feel of rural existence with all its troubles, inconveniences, discomforts, difficulties, hazards, uncertainties, caprices and poverty, and then, armed with this knowledge, dispensing justice, administering the area, maintaining law and order, punishing the guilty, rewarding the law-abiding, digging canals, building roads, establishing hospitals, opening schools, and, above all, upholding the sanctity and sovereignty of law. He was harsh when circumstances demanded a heavy hand. He could be mellow and kind when these qualities were needed. His authority was unchallenged and unchallengeable, as all imperial supremacy should be and always is. But it was tempered with

understanding and buttressed by a genuine interest in the welfare and uplift of the native rural population, as all imperial dispensations are not.

Waziruddin's agile intelligence took notice of this aspect of British rule. In his mind he compared the new with the old, the current with the past. He had seen how the Sikhs had run the country – haphazardly, with slight regard to any rules and regulations, waywardly, at times cruelly, but never according to a generally recognized and accepted pattern of administration. A description of the conditions obtaining in the pre-Sikh period and the years preceding it had reached him through his father and the traditional lore of the family and the locality. In the eighteenth century the Afghans had devastated the land by their frequent, useless and cruel forays, which had destroyed the local order and the tranquillity of human mind in equal measure. Before that, the Mughals had evolved a regular and calculated system of revenue assessment and collection, but the local functionaries of the revenue department were not always properly controlled by their superiors, some mansabdars were grasping and greedy in monetary matters and pitiless in recruiting soldiers to their levies, and the subahdar or governor was often inaccessible to the ordinary subjects of the Delhi court.

With this knowledge behind him and with his curiosity aroused by the arrival and behaviour of the white official, Waziruddin set out to probe the tentacles of the new system and test their strength. He made full use of the opportunities offered by the periodical visits to Kahnuwan of the settlement officer, the touring assistant commissioner or deputy commissioner, the civil surgeon, and the odd Christian missionary-cum-educational enthusiast (Amritsar and Gurdaspur were among the first districts to receive the blessing of modern English education). The squire of Kahnuwan questioned the British visitors with the zeal and innocence of the acolyte, the interest of an intelligent man,

the curiosity of the villager, the concern of a landholder whose traditional status and property were at stake, and the anxiety of a father who wanted to know the contours and climate of the new universe in which his children were now destined to live.

These official and church visitors must have found this local squire very different from the run-of-the-mill zamindars whose habit of acquiescence, or lack of inquisitiveness, or custom of bending low before every spokesman of the durbar, or dread of the foreign ruler, or mere placidness of temperament neither encouraged an exchange of views nor led to a conversation. They were ready-made subjects, the centuries-old fodder on which the imperial advent fed its armies and based its rule and depended with confidence in its own bright future and long life.

But here was a small zamindar who combined the vocations of agriculture and medicine, who was well read in Persian and Arabic and Punjabi literature, who knew some history, and who was more curious than he was pliant. The English officials replied to his queries, first with short and cursory phrases, then with longer explanations, and finally with almost friendly expositions. A rapport was achieved. A bridge was made between an Indian subject and the British Empire. The bridge proved strong enough to last four generations, each of which was exposed to fresh buffets of change emanating from the imperial machinery.

Waziruddin ushered in the British rule in the Punjab. His son, Ghulam Nabi, served the British for a very short period, but had meaningful and significant contacts with the provincial administration, and sent his older son to England to receive the finest education that several ancient seats of learning could impart to a young man. He also sent his younger son into the Punjab Civil Service where most of his colleagues and superiors were British. The older son never served the British, but had a sound respect for the

British way of life. After the departure of the British he sent his only son, the writer of this book, to a British university, and this son inherited and still retains in undiminished state this high opinion of the learning, the imperial quality, cast, ethos and stamp, and the personal character of the distant islanders who were the masters of Kahnuwan and Batala till their empire ended, *literally*, in smoke and blood.

I am unable to plumb or chart the feelings of Waziruddin. I was born 55 years after his death. He did not leave any record of his sentiments. But I know, through my father's word, what he told his sons. He wanted them to take to English education, to wear the livery of the new civilization as far as this did not directly conflict with the major values of their inheritance and traditional culture, to make their way in the new world on the strength of their Western education, native merit and personal effort rather than on their patrimony, and to change with the time as long as the time did not spin out of joint. In short, he wanted his male progeny to be modern. He must also have thought that the tide and tempo of time would see to it that women followed men.

Waziruddin persuaded his eldest son, Azizuddin, who had received some schooling, to enter the provincial revenue department. The decision must have cost a lot to him in terms of conventional self-respect and the custom of his class. The landholders, even the petty among them, did not look kindly at their sons' joining government service on such a junior level. They did not mind sending their boys to be enlisted in the army as naiks, lance naiks and havildars, partly because they were often innocent of any education and partly because the act of joining the soldiery of the imperial power realized two objectives in one move: becoming a part of the only branch of the ruling machinery where their traditional experience or familiarity could be of some help, and, more importantly, proffering the new rulers

with an irrefutable proof of their loyalty. Since history began for the Punjabis, the greatest among them had welcomed or at least accepted the arrival of foreign invaders, put their crops and horses at their disposal, and often provided them with soldiers.

But the squires of Kahnuwan had preferred the gentler ways of living and making a living. When some of them crossed the Beas to find new homes in Mukerian and Kaithan-Dasuha, they did not change their professions of farming and healing. There is no recorded case of any of these forbears joining the armies of the Afghans or the Mughals or the Sikhs. Even during the British rule this tradition was broken only once when a young man, not content with being an Assistant in one of the departments of the Government of India, seized upon the chance of quicker advancement in life offered by the second World War and joined the Royal Indian Air Force, but that was done only in 1943 and he entered the Force as an administrative commissioned officer, not as a flying pilot. The Kahnuwanians, of both banks of the river, preferred medicine to murder. They healed the wounds; they did not inflict them. They alleviated pain and suffering; they did not cause them. They cured; they did not kill.

This hallowed convention put Waziruddin to a hard test of will. He could not approve the entry of his son in the fighting forces of the British. He could not send him into the higher ranks of the civil service because the boy was not educated to the required standard. Yet he was anxious that the boy should join the mainstream of provincial official life. He accepted the only opening which presented itself. He arranged Azizuddin's appointment as a patwari, and also managed to get him posted at Batala, a town of historical importance which lay nearby and was familiar to Waziruddin.

It was rare for a zamindar's son to become a patwari, and many brows were raised in Kahnuwan. The peasants were surprised. The managers of the estate were outraged. A few

among the family protested. Some groans were heard from across the river. But Waziruddin was a man of a strong will and much moral courage. He had taken a decision based on the conviction that the future of the family lay, not in the fields of Kahnuwan and Lodhpur and Sathia, but in the emerging institutions of the cities. He lectured to his critics on the vistas opening up before the people in an age whose morning they were witnessing, on the new possibilities which time was offering, on the benefits of change, and on the brighter future which awaited those who took some risks, broke some traditions, faced some difficulties, accepted a new way of life, and left the village to explore new avenues. Perhaps he convinced a few people with these rational arguments and his insight into history. Perhaps he failed to make any converts. But he silenced everyone. He was an eighteenth-century zamindar, and his word was law for those living on and off his lands. He was a good hakim, and his peasants' gratitude overrode their displeasure. He was the head of the clan, and the respect commanded by his age and status suppressed all protests in the family circle. His decision stood.

His decision also stood the test of time. It was a turning point in the social and intellectual fortunes of the family. Had he been of a different mould, or met a different kind of English official, or allowed his will to weaken, or let the traditional comforts of feudal life to blind him to the new realities, the family would have continued its rural career and today I would have been a petty zamindar with large pretensions and a larger ego, and (as the world is now) of low morals. Waziruddin saved me from this horrible fate. The family had taken its first step towards modernity.

After dispatching Azizuddin to Batala as a patwari, Waziruddin attended to the future of his second son, Ghulam Nabi. With his keenness to educate his sons and his failure to succeed with the first one, he was determined to see his ambitions flower in the second experiment.

In 1858, when Ghulam Nabi was 6 years old, Waziruddin asked Azizuddin to take his younger brother with him to Batala and put him in the best school of the town. The mother of the child spoke out loudly against the decision, talked of her deprivation, conjured up the spectre of a lonely and unpleasant life for the boy in a new place, complained of the coming pangs of separation, cried at her dismay, and sealed her arguments with tears. Waziruddin was a good husband and loved his wife much. He was also a wise father and brooked no obstacles in the path of his son's advance to what he considered a better future. He struck a bargain with the lady of the house. Both of them would accompany the young boy to Batala, put him in a school, and stay with him for a few days, and the mother, if she so chose, could live there for a few weeks to see with her own eyes that her darling was comfortable and happy. Knowing Waziruddin's mind and his habit of having his own way, she agreed to the arrangement.

The usual preparations for the journey to Batala were made, and one morning the couple and their second son set out from Kahnuwan to the south. Had the 6-year boy enjoyed the magic vision to peep into the future, he would have known that this departure from the village signalled a transformation in the history of the family – a change which encompassed geography, migration, life in distant lands, the making of a fortune, and a final break from the centuries-old hereditary profession. The boy would occasionally visit Kahnuwan and get married here, but he would never make it his home and live in the haveli where he was born and had spent his childhood. His progeny was destined to roam the world, and some of it never to have a place which it could call its home. That is how, on a historical scale and on the flux of time, communities and races have migrated – some to assert their identity, some to assume a new form, and some to lose themselves in the maelstrom of shifts and moves.

The little caravan, so small in number but so symbolic in significance, arrived in Batala before it was noon. Azizuddin received his parents with due respect and greeted his younger brother with hugs and kisses. Next morning Waziruddin visited the two schools of the town. He first went to the government school situated in the heart of the city, near the Sikandar mosque, with its back almost touching the huge Sikh haveli which was to be purchased a mere 17 years later by the young boy for whom a proper school was being sought. He did not like it. It was too Indian for his taste and ambitions. Then he took himself to the other school located just outside the Teli Gate beyond the town rampart. He liked it at first sight. It was built on generous dimensions. The rooms were large and airy, with high ceilings. The compound was extensive. There were deep and long verandas. The drill ground had rows of mulberry trees on three sides. In one corner of the campus was a small well-kept garden abloom with flowers and skirted by shrubs in leaf. The farmer's eyes sparkled with delight at the prospect. It was a pleasant and green spot, almost adjacent to the town, quiet and peaceful, and run according to the British sense of order and decorum.

Waziruddin gave his approval. Then he met the staff and the head of the school. The little hopeful was presented to the masters who asked him a few formal questions, and the task of admission was completed. A Lady of England High School, as the seminary was called, thus became the nursery of Waziruddin's family. Later his son sent his own two sons to it, and the Western education of the Kahnuwanians began.

Ghulam Nabi began to attend the school with the usual mixture of self-cancelling emotions – apprehension, anxiety, excitement, desire to make friends, pride at being the first in the family to go to an English school, memory of his rural home, pain of separation from father and mother, hope to please his teachers, and other feelings

which invade the mind of every new entrant into the ever-widening world of his first school.

The rough edges of the new experience were rounded off and softened by some favourable circumstances and arrangements. His mother stayed on in Batala at Azizuddin's house for several months to postpone the pangs of separation and prepare the boy for independent living. The older brother was there to give him company and solace. Two family retainers, selected carefully by Waziruddin, were charged with chaperoning the young student to and from the school in the morning and again in the evening for games and sports. Once or twice a month his father came to Batala to see how his son "in exile" was faring. Within the school, the teachers, all of whom were Christians and most were British, gave him affection and discipline in alternating dozes in the tradition of the public schools of England. As he later told his sons, it was this finely calibrated administering of solicitude and strict supervision which made a man of him. He learnt to rely upon himself, to work hard, to respect learning, to be fair to others, to bear his share of responsibility, and to see the world with his own eyes and to judge it with his own mind. He understood the value of attending to details, taking serious things seriously, savouring the pleasures of life if they were worth savouring, looking after himself, and realizing the sanctity of human relationships. With the upbringing vouchsafed to him by the eagle-eyed Waziruddin in Kahnuwan was now combined the most careful training imparted by the dedicated Christian missionaries of the school. The happy result was the making of Ghulam Nabi into what the Englishman of those days defined as a gentleman.

Mother Zuhra left after a while. The duties of the chatelaine of Kahnuwan could not be neglected indefinitely. But before she left Batala she made sure that the dear boy whom she loved more than any of her other children was

well settled in Azizuddin's home and well adjusted in the school. She told him that he was now a big boy, capable of standing on his own feet, fit to look after himself, and well prepared to live away from dear mama. It is said that at the moment of parting there was moisture in Ghulam Nabi's eyes but no tears rolled down his cheeks. The masters of the ALOE school had kept their pledge, and the boy's own will power, partly inherited and partly nourished by himself, did the rest. Finding her son trying hard not to cry, the mother too kept her feelings under an iron control. She kissed his forehead, his eyes and his cheeks, hugged him to her bosom, gave some good advice, and hurriedly stepped up into the carriage before a new wave of pain could sweep over her. Within her burqa she wept all the way to Kahnuwan. And all the way Waziruddin who sat beside him did not utter a word. He was testing the nerves of both his wife and his son.

Of course, Ghulam Nabi felt lonely and at times forlorn. But soon he settled down in the routine of school life. He had a native wit and a natural aptitude for hard work. These inborn advantages were whipped into a resolve by an awareness of his father's clutching anxiety that he should make a career of which the family could be proud. This ambition and the hopes of it were conveyed to him by Waziruddin in his exhortations, counsels and conversations. The conviction that he was destined to turn his talent to good account was drummed into him month after month, incessantly, relentlessly, untiringly, resolutely. The child was brainwashed in a good cause. Fortunately, he had the intelligence to see the goodness of the cause and to lend his ear to filial advice.

Ghulam Nabi's determination to live up to his father's expectations drew new strength from the teachers' interest in his studies. His diligence impressed them, his inquisitive spirit pleased them, and his devotion to work encouraged them to give him extra coaching hours. There were not many

students in the school, and only a dozen or so were bright enough to attract the masters' close attention. Ghulam Nabi showed good results and the staff considered the promising pupil worth their while. That put a new heart into him and he redoubled his efforts to justify their confidence and not to let his father down. He was happy amid his new friends in the school. His work was satisfactory. He spent all his holidays and long vacations in Kahnuwan, and there was no break with the traditional and familiar way of life. He enjoyed his school life in Batala. He took pleasure in his returns to his rural background. He had struck a balance between the two very different parts of his life, and derived satisfaction from both. Each complemented the other. Western education went hand in hand with ancient custom and lore. His mind was developing a poise. He was more than content.

But there were two thistles in this garden of roses: the English language and the sister-in-law; and in a way both went together. Ghulam Nabi, or his father, desired Western education, and it was not accessible without a good knowledge of English. The education was available only in Batala where the boy had to live with Azizuddin's wife. Ambition and blood were brought together by coincidence. Unfortunately, the conjunction threatened to turn into an encounter.

The English language and the desire to acquire it came first. This goal brought Ghulam Nabi to Batala at a very young age and made him stay in unfamiliar surroundings and come into close contact with strangers. English did not come easily to a boy brought up in Punjabi and Persian. The alphabet was different, and so was the script. The mental assumptions, the ways of thought, the manner of putting things, the background of the words, the association of ideas, the idiom, the social origins of expressions and proverbs, the temperament and mood of the new language were not only at variance with those of the local tongues but, for a callow Indian mind, outlandish.

It was not a question of picking up the vocabulary and learning the rules of grammar of a new language, but of transferring oneself mentally and imaginatively to an alien universe. The boy had to appreciate how an Englishman clothed his feelings in words, to notice the shades of meaning from which he could choose the right adjective or adverb to suit the strength of emphasis required by the occasion, to learn to distinguish between one nuance and another, to search for and use a phrase which conveyed with precision and brevity the intention and meaning of the speaker or the writer – in short, to try to use the language with care, knowledge, fluency and exactness of the one born into it. This was the ideal. The reality fell short of it, but not too short and not for the lack of trying.

Look at the circumstances in which Ghulam Nabi was wrestling with the foreign language. The British had been in the Punjab for exactly 9 years when his trek to Western education began. The milieu was local, native and parochial. Batala was a small town. It was rich in history, but poor in contacts with the new rulers. Hardly any Indian spoke English or even pretended to read it. The number of Englishmen who were proficient in Punjabi or Hindustani or both was much larger than of the Indians who could claim even a nodding acquaintance with English. The time when the strains of English would be in the air was still 70 years way. The society was pucca native. The ordinary man looked at the Englishman with an attitude composed, in variable proportions, of fear, respect, mental resistance, instinctive acquiescence (the child of a history of 2,000 years or more), loyalty, curiosity and wonder. Some of these emotions and sentiments also accompanied or determined the decision and process of learning the language of the Englishman.

The acquisition involved two steps, one coming before it and the other during it. The decision to switch over to the language of the new rulers was preceded by a train of

philosophical-cum-sociological thinking which bore historical, political and practical dimensions. Was it right to learn the language of a foreign master? Had the Punjabis not learnt the tongue of the Afghans and the Mughals several hundred years ago? Did the religion of the native speakers of the language matter in a situation of imperial rule? What were the practical advantages of being able to use English? Better jobs? A higher social status? Closer association with the rulers? Better understanding of the administrative system? Deeper knowledge of the mind of the new ruling class? The higher and better class of Indians had for centuries acquired a good knowledge of the Persian language though it was an imperial importation. Would an English education pose a danger to Islam or weaken the native's faith in his traditions and values? A few years later these questions were to be asked and debated by Sir Sayyid Ahmad Khan and others in northern India and Sayyid Ameer Ali and Nawab Abdul Latif Khan in eastern India. This public debate and the resulting controversy still lay in the future. But for Ghulam Nabi and Waziruddin it was a personal problem and in the here and now.

Waziruddin could not wait, and was not aware that there was any occasion to wait, for a signal from Aligarh or Calcutta. He knew his mind and was a man of strong opinions and firm resolves. From his own brief but intensive experience of knowing the English visitors to Kahnuwan he had made up his mind that a knowledge of English was a desirable thing in itself and a required passport to enter the world opening before the Punjab. The mental struggle which shaped this decision was the portion of Waziruddin. The hard task of transferring this conviction into practice was the business of Ghulam Nabi. One generation plans and dreams. The second labours and achieves.

Ghulam Nabi had a different set of problems to solve which had more to do with etymology, pronunciation and

grammar than with the philosophy, tradition and values relating to the acquisition of a new language. He had accepted his father's decision with all the physical penalties in the act of obedience in its wake: exile, separation and loneliness. The mental burden thus placed upon him was lightened by several favourable conditions.

The fairies which waved their wands at his birth must have been in a very good mood. They brought him gifts which any other child of his background would have envied. He was born under a lucky star with potential mental faculties which he was to develop to his great advantage and to the family's good fortune. He had the ability to work long hours and still keep exhaustion at bay. He could conquer loneliness with the fire of his determination. He could sacrifice physical comfort and personal convenience in order to justify the trust placed in him. He enjoyed a remarkable power of concentration, rare at such early age. He was blessed with the ability to see the goal he had set before himself and not the obstacles which barred his way to it. Equipped with these native capacities he set out to learn the English language, study all subjects through its medium, and to make the best of the education he received.

In his case luck favoured the determination of the startlingly young mind. His teachers combined the fervour of missionaries with the devotion of their profession in the performance of their duties. Driven by a zeal which hardly distinguished masculine Christianity from rampant imperialism, they gave their best to their students. Close personal attention was the norm. A genuine interest in the mental and physical welfare of the student lay behind the classroom instruction. As most of the staff was British with good degrees from the home country the teaching of English was of a high order. But the system was unforgiving in the demands it made on those placed under the regimen. The Englishman was a hard taskmaster (as much in education as

in administration) and expected his wards to match his own perseverance and capacity for work. No compromises were allowed. Merit reigned supreme. The effort tested all the faculties. The failures fell by the wayside. The winners reaped the rewards of their labour.

In this just system it was not difficult to succeed but it was also easy to be thrown out. Ghulam Nabi sat down with an iron resolve and an unflagging will to play the game according to the rules and to win. When his teachers noticed the mark of resolve on his brow they gave him all the help they could. He read the elementary books with them. He pored over the rules of composition under their supervision. He improved his grammar with their red pencil hovering over his consciousness. He studied history and geography with a world globe and an atlas before him. He conducted scientific experiments with extra care. He borrowed books from the small school library to advance his knowledge of the new world he was entering and also to increase his speed of reading and deepen the comprehension of what he read. His passion for studies evoked a matching admiration in his teachers. Often in the evening, after the sports hour, he stayed on in the school to receive some coaching in the subject which was taxing his ability or proving to be beyond his solitary effort.

The studies continued at home after a reasonable break necessary to refresh his mind. There were no distractions. Azizuddin was still a bachelor and had his own load of official work to dispose of. There was nobody else in the house except the servants. Ghulam Nabi opened his books, put them on the table specially made for him on his father's orders (the first table and chair in my family), placed a lantern beside them, sat down in the chair, and repeated, revised or supplemented the school lessons. He did his homework, read the lessons given that morning once again, looked at the old lessons to make sure that no difficulties

remained unsolved, cast a glance at the lessons to be taught on the morrow, indulged in the indispensable mugging up of some scientific formulas, some knotty grammatical rules and a few mathematical equations. He drew maps of India and her neighbouring states and principalities, writing in the names of major cities and outlying countries. To begin with he was good in physical and natural sciences and mathematics, but he had some difficulty in other subjects where a command of language was in greater demand. Gradually he improved his English to cope with the deficiency. There were no further difficulties.

The personal problem was more intractable. During his last two years at the school, when he was doing quite well in his studies, he had to live with his sister-in-law. Azizuddin had married one of his distant cousins from across the Beas. This woman, Sharfunnisa by name and generally called Sharfo, had a bad temper, an unruly will, moods which came and went like whims, and an overpowering ambition to govern the household with unquestionable authority. She quarrelled with her husband, behaved with her father-in-law and mother-in-law at just a bearably correct level, treated the servants harshly, and looked at Ghulam Nabi generally as hardly more than a necessary nuisance and at times as a mere interloper who had really no place in her home.

Sharfo's temperament and conduct shook the Batala establishment, and much more for a generation to come. Naturally the worst sufferer was her husband. A woman can make or unmake a home as irretrievably as a man. Sharfo unmade hers. She was rude to Azizuddin (in an age when in all strata of society and in all families, even the polygamous, the wives' courtesy, solicitude and obedience were universally fulfilled expectations), unmindful of his needs, and gave no heed to domestic peace. Paradoxically, she wanted to be the sole ruler of the household whose tranquillity she was wrecking and whose political economy

she was ruining. The servants in the house were all old retainers from the lands of Kahnuwan who had served the family for two or three generations with devotion and had always found their loyalty rewarded with generosity, patronage and care. She treated them like slaves. She did not even spare the two aged men sent from Kahnuwan to act as Ghulam Nabi's servitors She was awkward with the neighbours. She split her spleen on the visitors. Her anger was easy to arouse, and it targeted everyone within range.

Azizuddin was by nature a man of equable and placid turn of mind who respected his elders, loved his equals, treated his juniors with affection, looked after his servants like a father, and generally followed the provisions of a moral code which marched with the dictates of his own conscience and the demands of a well-established tradition. He tried to convince his wife that her view of life was wrong, that she was bringing a bad name to the family, and that she was making his life difficult. His protests fell on deaf ears. He made some compromises with his own principles, humoured the termagant, made light of her bad temper and mischief-mongering, and ignored her more venomous remarks. This had no effect on her. He was a patient man, but his patience was tested so sorely and for so long a spell that after more than a decade of married life and the birth of two boys, in about 1880 he was driven by Sharfo's tenacious querulousness and his own despair into a second marriage. But I am forestalling later events.

Ghulam Nabi was the innocent victim of Sharfo's fiery temper and raging fury. When he confronted the indomitable sister-in-law he was only in his late teens, a turning of time when consciousness becomes awareness, when feelings gain a sharp edge, when sensitivity matures the mind, when the first glimpse of self-respect comes within the range of the soul's eye, when turbulent emotions begin to settle down and seek stable perches for their outward expression, when human

relationships take on fast lineaments, and when objects of hatred and love are sorted out. His encounter with Sharfo came about at a dangerous crossroads of his life.

There were further complications. Ghulam Nabi was living away from his parents and brothers and sisters, his own home, and his childhood friends. He had abandoned Kahnuwan for the sake of an ideal. He missed much in life, but bore the suffering because it was in a good cause. He was a guest in his elder brother's house, and his training and tradition had taught him the duties and obligations of his status. He loved Azizuddin, and wanted to love and be loved by Sharfo. He summoned the last reserves of his patience, forbearance and stoicism to try to live in relative peace in her house, to keep himself away from the frequent, alas! too frequent, outbreaks of hostility in the domestic field, to lose himself in the labours of his studies, and to pass his last two years with Azizuddin without letting any storm break his nerve.

Ghulam Nabi was made of a sterner stuff and commanded a greater will power than Sharfo suspected. He refused to be a party to the domestic quarrels. He shut his ears to the hot words which flowed out of her like high waves of a sudden but familiar flood. He worked at his books with even greater concentration and for longer hours with a desperate devotion, which erected a rampart between him and the tempest raging around him. He ate what was served to him. He ordered his own servants to bear the brunt of Sharfo's anger and resentment in respectful silence. He himself turned reticent. Hard work, separation from his own family, and the example of his British teachers had already made him serious-minded beyond his years. The interlude with Sharfo moulded him in the cast of a serious demeanour which became his permanent character.

He confided in one or two of his teachers with whom he had struck up a kind of a friendship. Their advice, solace and

moral support helped him to weather the storm and live safely through these two swirling years. He spent longer hours at the school. His servants brought his lunch to him, which he ate in the classroom or the laboratory. In cold weather he went for long walks, often on the road leading to Kahnuwan: an act of psychological compensation; in the hot months he slept a little in the afternoon at the house of one of his masters. Then he resumed his studies, did his homework, played awhile, talked to his teachers, and waited for the sun to go down before returning home. A silent dinner (if he could help it), a few minutes of conversation with his brother, a few polite replies to Sharfo's inquiries, and he went back to his books, finding concentration easier in the quiet of the late hours of the night. His faithful servants knew the situation well but never referred to it in his presence. Their hearts went out to the young boy who was suffering so much in stoic silence, and they redoubled their efforts to make his life as easy and comfortable as it lay in their power. In spite of his exhortations to the contrary, they kept awake and alert till he retired to bed. But when they went to Kahnuwan in the holidays they told Waziruddin what was going on in Azizuddin's house in Batala. The father paled at the ill tidings and rued the day he had approved of this match for his eldest son. He felt even more sorry for his second son who was suffering in silence. He chafed at his helplessness and prayed to God for both of his older sons.

A year after joining the school Ghulam Nabi had a younger brother, Ghulam Qadir, who was born in 1859. Another brother, the youngest of the male children of Waziruddin, Ghulam Muhammad, was born in 1862. The presence of the two younger brothers in Kahnuwan had added much joy to his visits to the village. The mask of his sober and sedate behaviour received its first cracks when he was with these boys. He played with them as all children do, and the innocent activity transported him to a different world.

He forgot the pressure of his studies, the responsibilities of his school work, the loneliness which awaited him in Batala, even the spur of necessity which made him leave Kahnuwan again and again. He laughed with them, chattered with them, becoming an imp among the imps. He became human and normal for a few days which he spent with them. Brother called to brother and his excitement knew no bounds. These joyful visits continued for 8 or 9 years. And then two events headed his young life into a new direction.

A few months before Azizuddin's marriage, when Ghulam Nabi was in the 8th. class, the divisional inspector of schools (or whatever he was called in those days) visited the ALOE School, and during the inspection he went round the classrooms to gauge the quality of teaching. He also tarried in each class to talk to the students and ask them questions. When he came to the room where the 8th. class was in session he conversed with two or three boys and then he turned to the bright-eyed Ghulam Nabi who sat on one of the front benches. The interrogation lasted longer than the boy or his teacher expected. The inspector uttered a few words of encouragement, smiled to Ghulam Nabi, and left the room to continue his rounds. The boy had no inkling of the significance of this event, and not the wildest idea that it was going to change his life and the destiny of the family.

The inspector returned to the headmaster's study and asked for a full report on Ghulam Nabi from his teachers. The boy had impressed him with his intelligence, fearlessness, ready answers, self-confidence, command of English as measured by the standard of his age and education, and above all his moral courage in confessing that to some of the questions posed he had no answer at the moment but could supply them at a day's notice. The inspector wanted to know everything available on the student: family background, financial circumstances, examination results, teachers' reports, sports record, moral reputation, the names of his friends, and

the headmaster's assessment of him from year to year. He was thorough and demanding, and wanted every little fact to be brought to his notice. After a flurry of activity and a great deal of rustling of old papers and consulting of annual reports and files and registers, the inspector summoned all the teachers of the 8th. class to the headmaster's office and announced to them the result of his findings. Ghulam Nabi was a brilliant student and a bright boy. A career must be chosen for him, and if the boy agreed to it every facility ought to be provided to enable him to complete his education and enter adult life without any academic or professional handicaps.

Ghulam Nabi had scored the first triumph of his life, though its consummation was seven years away.

THE IMPERIAL DIMENSION

Before proceeding with the story of Waziruddin's foresight and Ghulam Nabi's rising fortune it is important to recall to mind the aims and policies of British imperial rule in the Punjab. Before conquering the province the British had been in power, directly and *de jure* or indirectly but de facto, in most parts of India for nearly a hundred years. The Utilitarian theory had appeared to deflect and guide the stream of imperialism into a system of social welfare and moral uplift. The earlier ideal of Christianizing India and popularizing the gospel was abandoned in favour of educational advance, social progress, material uplift and the rule of law. The new rulers studied India as if it were a textbook and interpreted it as if it were a scripture. A bewildering variety of theories, ideas, plans and arrangements were offered, prescribed and debated. Ultimately everyone agreed that, next to the continuing flow of the imperial tide, the goal in India was to civilize it and make it a modern land.

The Punjab was the last major beach mounted by the imperial waters. The circumstances in which it was annexed,

the nature of the legacy of the anarchic Sikh regime which preceded the annexation, the backwardness of the country, the geopolitical character of the area, and the unique tripartite communal composition of the population, put the Punjab in a special category. To deal with the singular problems of the province a special school of administration was devised whose first principle was the combination of strict discipline and parental care: no compromise in justice, rule of law and British sovereignty; every concession in the task of winning over the people. The duty of improving the lot of the masses was to be discharged under the panoply of an awesome authority. This twin engine of power and benevolence brooked no delay, admitted no excuses, acknowledged no pretexts, entertained no explanations. Those who drove it were given immense powers and unbounded discretion, both to punish and reward, think anew and improvise, plan and execute, appoint and dismiss, dismantle and reconstruct, confiscate and distribute. The range of authority was endless. The objectives of its exercise were clearly demarcated and strictly defined.

The principal instrument of change was to be education – Western education. As soon as the province was in British hands the categorical imperative of the consolidation of power was followed immediately by the first wave of modern education. The government and the Christian missionary societies set to this work with demoniacal zeal. Schools of every kind – municipal, governmental, male, female, vernacular, Anglo-vernacular, English-medium – were opened in every city and every town, big or small.

One of the essential needs of the population was medical care. As all the required physicians and surgeons could not be called up from Britain, medical education was given priority. But modern Western medicine demanded a good grasp of the English language and at the same time native doctors were urgently needed, therefore a medical school was opened in 1860 in Lahore near the Anarkali Bazaar. Students who knew good

English were available in such small numbers that the medical school offered two parallel but unequal courses of study. A 5-year course taught in English produced a "graduate", the equivalent of the later-day Bachelor of Medicine and Surgery (MB,BS), who was appointed as Assistant Surgeon at a government hospital if he chose to enter State employment. The inferior 3-year course taken in the vernacular tongue produced a licentiate, who was qualified to be posted as a health assistant at the municipal dispensaries. The MB,BS degree class did not open till 1906 and the first graduate passed out in 1911.

The health and education departments were anxious to recruit at least a reasonable number of freshmen to the medical school. Their efforts met some serious rebuffs. In the first place, the natives were not very willing to go to any school at all, and even less willing to enter an English-medium school. Secondly, modern medicine carried with it not only the stigma of Westernization but also the long apprenticeship of 5 years. Still, a few Hindus and Sikhs and more Christians opted for medical education.

For reasons which every modern historian has mentioned and which are now familiar to the educated and the well-informed, the Muslims of India disliked and resisted the advent of English education more stubbornly than the other natives. This attitude, very short-sighted and injudicious in our eyes today with the advantage of hindsight, was the child of an out-of-date superiority complex, a fear of the unknown, an unintelligent attachment to a ritual-ridden faith, and affiliation to a decadent society. The Musalman of that day saw himself in the mirror of his own past and was loathe to believe that his empire had passed away, and that a new world had dawned in which the pressures and demands of Western civilization were irresistible. He was also ignorant of the West and therefore afraid of what it might do to his personality and character. He also believed that any knowledge derived from a non-Islamic source would compromise his religious

convictions, forgetting the seminal role of Greek thought and neo-Platonism in the intellectual and philosophical development of Islam. He behaved as a true member of a society which had been in decline for several decades and whose confirmed beliefs and values lacked any mental content or introspective ballast.

The Punjabi Muslim's bias against English education was less pronounced than that of some other parts of the subcontinent. For this there were many reasons. First, he could not thank the British enough for releasing him from the oppression and tyranny of the later Sikh rule. And if he took his mind further back in time he could only recall the pre-Sikh depredation of his province by the Afghan invaders and marauders. He was thus justified in looking at the British entry as a return of peace and tranquillity after an interval of nearly 150 years. Why should he hesitate to learn the language of his new masters and acquire the knowledge which came with it?

Secondly, his geopolitical situation curbed his chauvinism and encouraged his outward-looking attitude. He lived on the edge of the subcontinent. His land had been the funnel through which every foreign invader from the pre-historical times had passed and gone further afield to conquer inner India. He had seen in his history a dozen tribes and armies marching in, staying awhile, proceeding further, returning in glory, marching out, or making a home here for a few decades or a few centuries. He had tolerated them, often helped them with men and material, at times welcomed them, given his girls and boys in marriage to them, mixed with them, and made some of them live amidst him for ever. He knew the foreigners well and could handle them. For over a thousand years he had handled them with tact. He did not doubt his ability to handle the British. He was well versed in the exercise. Experience gave him confidence.

His lack of parochialism had another source too. Chauvinism, arrogance and excessive self-assertion are at

bottom self-created compensations for a severe inferiority complex. The strong need not pretend. The weak cannot but pretend. The Muslims of Delhi and the United Provinces considered themselves the successors of the Mughal grandeur and sole inheritors of Indian Muslim culture. They preened themselves on their civilization and superior way of life. The Punjabi Muslim put in no such claims. He had his own culture which pre-dated the U.P. Muslim culture by a few centuries, and it was native to boot. He had confidence in what he had and the assurance that it was his own. In his strength he could borrow a lot from others without feeling inferior. He approached the fount of Western civilization without any loss of self-confidence or self-respect.

Thirdly, the Punjabi Muslim was curious to know more about his new rulers. The inquisitiveness came as much from his native character as from the special foreignness of the rulers. He had known many kinds and varieties and strains of foreigners, from the Greeks and the Huns to the Arabs and the Afghans and the Turks. But the British were a new race and a new culture. They had not come from the north-west on horseback but from a distant land in ships. They had not come in hordes or with large armies. They had conquered the Punjab (and most of India) with native soldiers. They spoke an alien tongue. They dressed in outlandish clothes. They behaved so differently from other imperialists. The phenomenon aroused the interest of the Punjabi Muslim. He wanted to understand the white man. The first step towards this knowledge was the language the strangers used. He went to school as much to improve his prospects in the new world as to know what made the Englishman tick.

Fourthly, the British themselves both encouraged and satisfied this Punjabi curiosity. Contemporary official reports and the memoirs and reminiscences of the British officials serving in the province bear ample testimony to this. More than any other Indian territory, the British official came

closest to the native in the Punjab. The special band of administrators who composed the Punjab school, and made it a magnificent instrument of enlightened imperialism, was devoted to the Punjabi native. But the definition of the object of their love was the rural native. The city produced, proliferated, harboured and glorified the critics of imperial rule, the protesters, the detractors, the newspaper editors, the loud-voiced lawyers, the rowdy processionists, the politicians. The small towns and the countryside were peopled by the salt of the earth, the hard-working ploughman, the landless labourer, the petty landholder, the big zamindar, the menial classes – all those who lived on the land, fed the cities, felt closer to nature, prized efficient administration, appreciated the rule of law, needed a good irrigation system, and wanted farm-to-market roads. These people had been exploited and oppressed by foreign rulers and native feudal lords for long centuries. The rulers were still foreign, but the unbridled arrogance and unquestioned power of the zamindar were now trammelled and circumscribed by laws and courts and the sway of justice. Though active politics and urban discontent came later (and came as a result of the new education imparted by the "hated" British), the administrators of the Punjab school demonstrated a remarkable prescience in their early days of supremacy in cultivating the rural population.

Whatever the cynical, confirmed, self-interested, opportunistic and biased nationalist of the yesteryear, the "nationalist" and "patriotic" historian of later years, and the "progressive" anti-imperialist of today may claim, the historical *fact is that* in 98 years the British did more for the welfare and enlightenment of the Punjabi hinterland (and also for the cities) than had been done by all the earlier rulers in several centuries. They gave it peace, better agriculture, regular water supply, an equitable land revenue system, courts of law, schools, hospitals, co-operative societies and banks, and access to justice. These are not gifts to be spurned. Not

many imperial systems have granted them, and not a single recipient in history has failed to profit from them.

But, alas! man has not learnt from history. In the ever-lengthening past the general reaction of the subject races and peoples has been one of ingratitude, forgetfulness, spurious complaints, inflated claims and unfounded grumbles. We remember the haughty deputy commissioner; we forget that this inhabitant of a cold country toured his district, for 15 days in every 30, in the blistering summer months on horseback and on foot and stayed in tents in an age when there were no air conditioners, no refrigerators, no fans, no jeeps, no large motor cars, not to speak of the present-day Pajeros and Landrovers, no luxurious rest houses, no telephones, no good roads. We remember the racial discrimination practised by many white rulers; we forget that after 200 years of Mughal rule only a handful of Indian Muslims were admitted into the mansabdar class; we also forget that in today's Pakistan ethnic, provincial and sectarian hatreds and killings flourish *ad libitum*. We remember that the Governor of the Punjab declared martial law in three districts of the province for a few weeks under very special circumstances and that 300 odd Indians were gunned down in Amritsar on the order of a power-drunk and addle-pated British brigadier general; we forget that four native commander-in-chief of independent Pakistan, usurped power and kept the entire country under martial law for 15 years and under military rule for far longer, that none of them was punished or held accountable, and that no inquiry was allowed to be held into their conduct. It is also important to recall that an official committee of investigation examined the question of the imposition of the 1919 British martial law, that the officer concerned was censured, and that the Indian politicians were allowed to appoint their own commission of inquiry and publish its condemnatory findings.

We remember that the British were foreigners who conquered India; we forget that *all* their Muslim predecessors

were also foreigners who captured India by the sword. We remember that the British rule was an imperial rule; we forget what we owe to this rule: open-door justice, rule of law, honest and efficient administration, modern education, medical care, clean water, civic sense, knowledge of the outside world, training in democracy (of which we have made a mockery), rise of nationalism (on the basis of which we demanded and won Pakistan), political awareness, economic advance; we forget that had India not been a colony of the British, today we would have been another Somalia, Ethiopia or Afghanistan.

How selective can we be in our remembrances and recollections! Human memory is always discriminative; were it not so man would go insane with the burden of the entire past crammed into his cranium. Historical memory is faithful and comprehensive; were it not so our past would be either a paradise which we have lost or a hell which we have escaped.

It is good to recall these things because they have made us what we are. Nearly 800 years of Muslim rule over the Punjab did not leave on our mind even one-tenth of the imprint that the 98-year British presence did. In many substantial ways the Punjab emerged as the most Westernized and Anglicized of all the Indian territories. The Punjabi absorbed more of the Englishman's way of life than did any other native. He copied him to the limits of his own ingenuity and within the compass of his age. The educated elite tried to live, speak, dress, eat and behave like an Englishman. In imitating him the Punjabi paid his ruler the highest compliment. He continues to pay it *till today* – observe our elite English-medium educational institutions, our civil services academies, our military establishment, our ambition to send our children to British universities and schools, etc. However vociferously the patriot, the leftist, or the "nationalist" historian might rail against the perfidious Albion and its colonialism, he still speaks in English, uses categories of Western reasoning, reads

English books, quotes British authorities, and wallows in his British legacy. The brown sahib is still a sahib, but a shameless hypocrite. He refuses to acknowledge what he imitates. He has lost his character. His ancestor of a hundred years ago also tried to live like an Englishman, but without making a secret of his ambition or his satisfaction. The elders were honest, straightforward, frank, self-confident; they had the wit to seek knowledge, the courage to name its inspiration and source, and the conscience to express their gratitude. But he is dishonest, furtive, mean of soul and a victim of complexes; he looks for short cuts to success (not knowledge), has the temerity to call the source of acquisition his own, and the wickedness to attribute his gains to his own greatness. In a frenetic but misleading attempt to uphold his British legacy he is destroying his own self and corrupting his inheritance. As the Persian proverb goes, only the intelligent can imitate (*naql ra aql baid*).

The last factor which turned the Punjabi Muslim into an avid admirer and follower of the British was his inbred sense of loyalty. The theme demands a book to itself, or at least a chapter, and the exercise is worth somebody's effort and will produce fascinating results. I am writing my own story, not the history of a people, and must needs be brief. But I am a part of my people and the narrative of my family is a part of the history of the Punjab. A few paragraphs on the subject will not only record the attitude of my clan to British rule but also illustrate from personal experience the character of a people and a verity of their history.

Loyalty to him who sits on the throne or leads a victorious army has been instilled into the Punjabi Muslim mind by his religion, history and self-interest. He is a prisoner of his faith and his experience. In his ultimate present-day incarnation his convictions have become a dungeon.

The Quranic injunction on obeying "those in authority" (*ul-al-amr*) has been interpreted traditionally to mean

unquestioned subservience to a Muslim ruler irrespective of his political credentials and moral record. This reading has been buttressed and reinforced by a few apparently spurious prophetic traditions. In the absence of any reinterpretation on rational lines or any substantial democratic content in classical political thought the original statement continued to have a paradoxical impact on the public life of Muslim societies. In theory, all protest and criticism were disallowed. In practice, Muslim history from the Prophet's death is crowded with insurrections, revolutions, wars of succession, civil wars, mutinies and regicides.

In an illiterate and backward-looking people, as the Indian Muslims were throughout their history, the contents of the traditional glosses and commentaries ruled all religious schools and seminaries. The radicalism of Shah Waliullah, Ameer Ali and Iqbal failed to affect the common mind. This refusal to seek a liberal approach to public life has another cause in the popular sentiment in favour of the Muslim empires in India. The Muslim minority was deeply attached to the imperial court, not because it was imperial but because it was Muslim and it ruled over a vast non-Muslim population. Over the centuries this religious dimension developed into a political conviction. "The king must be obeyed" became the major premise of the ordinary Muslim's thinking.

Gradually this principle took the shape of a maxim, and the religion of the ruler faded out of all calculation. The Muslim subjects of the Hindu and Sikh native states (Mysore, Kapurthala, Patiala and the rest) were as good and loyal citizens as the others. The advent of the British was not opposed by any significant portion of the Muslim populace; most of the Muslim princes (like the Nizam of Hyderabad) helped the British to conquer the country. The fact that the new imperialists belonged to the category of *ahl-i-Kitab* (the people of the book as defined by the

Quran) made their sovereignty even more acceptable to the Muslims. So much for the religious ingredient of loyalty.

In north India, and particularly in the Punjab, history outrivalled religion in seniority. For a few thousand years before the first Muslim general stepped on the Indian soil this territory had been receiving foreign invaders with clockwise regularity. Only a few were opposed with any success. Generally they were welcomed or readily tolerated. For several centuries the Punjabi had not only experienced the impact of alien incursions and rules but often served as their ancillary supports. It was not uncommon for him to give all aid and comfort, in most cases voluntarily and in his own interest, to the invader, help him in conquering parts of the rest of India, and often accompany him in this profitable adventure. When the invader was a Muslim the Punjabi faithful was of course at his beck and call as a religious duty.

Hanging out banners in welcome of a foreign conqueror became a routine for the people of this land. When the British arrived from the east of the Punjab they were treated like the traditional invader from the north and the west. The difference in religion had become irrelevant. At the hour of the final test in 1857 the Punjabi Muslim chose to keep quiet and ignore the call to rise given by the King of Delhi. On the contrary, some among him rallied around the Union Jack and helped in running it up their own former imperial capital.

There are three principal forces which mould human mind and behaviour: history, religion and literature. Of these religion may be more personal, more active in rousing emotions, and more prolific in producing fanatics, but history is older than religion and makes its way into our consciousness by paths and walkways of which the consciousness has no inkling. History encompasses all our traditions, inspirations, ambitions, defeats, triumphs, trials, good deeds, misdeeds, actions and their consequences.

These are the things which mould the character of a people and of the individual. We are what our history has made us. History is our skin as well as our soul. We can abandon one religion and embrace another. We cannot exchange our history with the history of any other nation or race or people. History is our destiny, our decree, our past which has come to live with us. The Punjabi Muslim had been cast in the forge of his history. And in this forge he had been hammered into shape by the force of loyalty.

Still another factor contributed to this habit of loyalty in the Punjabi Muslim and strengthened it into an addiction. This was self-interest. Like the Muslims of other parts of India, he formed a minority community in the subcontinent. Minorities are everywhere afraid of majorities. His fear was compounded into horror by history and religion. His affiliation with Muslim imperialism had kept alive his security, self-respect and pride. The fall of the Mughals turned these complacencies into autumn leaves before a driving wind. The Hindu belonged to a totally different religion with whom the Muslim could not find any point of contact, not to speak of empathy or compromise. Now the Muslim was not only a fellow-subject of a third force but also in a minority in a land he had ruled for 800 years.

To protect himself against all the unfavourable winds blowing against him the Muslim had to have protectors. He wanted concessions, safeguards, quotas, special dispensations, cultural rights and other extraordinary privileges, which every weak minority needs and demands. His case was even more serious. He was doomed to be a perpetual minority, unless he chose to give up his religion (an inconceivable idea). He was also backward in everything that mattered: education, economy, political consciousness, means of self-projection. He found that the Hindu leaders were more interested in an Indian nationalism which rejected religion as an irrelevant consideration in modern democratic

politics. Nor did they appear to be keen on enlisting the Muslim in their ranks on his terms.

The political arithmetic of democracy and the religious configuration of politics did not leave the Muslim with any choice. He had to make friends with the British in sheer self-preservation. There were solid advantages to be derived from this coalition. The British were the rulers and in a position to give him at least some of the things he required. Concessions and protection could only come from the fount of authority, the British, not from the centre of oppositional agitation, the Hindus and the Congress. And in fact the Muslim gained much from his loyalty.

Unlike other Indian Muslims (but like the Bengali Muslim), the Punjabi Muslim was caught in a peculiarly vicious game of numbers. He was in a majority in his province, but the edge of the wedge was paper thin. The Hindus formed a large majority of the rest of the population, and were in addition far superior in education and economy. The small group of the Sikhs made up for its size in its loyalty, strategic political indispensability and large representation in the army. The Muslim found himself in a maddening situation where he was in the majority and yet could not govern the province. He was also an inept politician and did not play his cards well. The Sikhs could have been won over, but they were culturally and religiously much closer to the Hindus and might also have demanded an impossible pound of flesh. The Muslim discovered that not only was his desire to govern the province an impossible dream but even his honourable existence was in jeopardy – until he found strong friends. Official friendship was purchased with unflinching loyalty to the British. He did not think that he was paying too much for a commodity which he needed badly. Many of his descendants still don't think that the price was out of proportion to what they received in return

I don't understand the attitude of the present-day Pakistani historian or general writer who takes pride in uttering the lie that Indian Muslims were not loyal. He betrays his ignorance and dishonesty, and indulges in perverted logic. He has no knowledge of modern history and speaks from fabricated facts. He is dishonest in so far as he does not realize the enormity of his offence in misleading his readers. His reasoning is perverted because he describes the Muslims as great, persistent and self-sacrificing Indians who hated and fought British imperialism, and in the same breath paints the pro-Congress, anti-British "nationalist" Muslims as the principal traitors to the Muslim struggle for freedom and the foremost enemies of the Pakistan movement. In his blind zeal for putting the Muslim League on par with the Indian National Congress, he distorts his own history out of recognition.

If he suffers from an inferiority complex, there is no occasion for it as far as the practice of loyalty is concerned. Every party or people designs its strategy and policy with an eye to its goal. If its interest demands that it must befriend the foreign ruler then it befriends him. There is nothing to be ashamed of it. In fact, our history proves that the principle of loyalty reaped rich dividends, not only politically but also intellectually. In politics, the loyal Muslim League won the last battle; the Congress Muslim lost the game and with it his self-respect (ask the "nationalist" Muslims who now live in India if their politics have protected them against Hindu fundamentalism). In education and intellect, too, the loyal Muslim provided a leadership and a liberal tendency which were out of the reach of the detractors and critics of the British.

Who led the Muslims into the modern age? Not the fundamentalist followers of Sayyid Ahmad Barelawi. Not the "freedom fighters" of 1857. Not the ulema of Deoband. Not the maulawis and orators of the Jamiat-ul-Ahrar. Not the tradition-

bound doctors of religion of the Jamaat-i-Islami. All these men were sincere in their opinions, committed to their approach, and convinced that they were doing the right thing. But they were the rearguard of a faltering army, not the advance agents of a fresh force. They looked to the past, argued in absolute categories, and dreamed of recapturing a glory which largely existed only in their tired imagination. They hugged the classics to their breast, shouted out-of-date slogans, and broadcast a message of return to the original. But there was no agreement on what was the original. The Quran as it had been expounded by the medieval doctors? The Traditions collected by editors who lived 150 years after the death of the Prophet (PBUH)? The classical lawmakers who combined the Book with the Tradition, put in some local colour, and varnished the codes with their own predilections and preferences? Nobody seemed to know or recognize or identify the original. Everyone debated and fought about it. It was not a movement for or towards a new future or independence or honourable existence. It was intellectual anarchy, a doctrinal civil war, a religious free-for-all, in which national interest and personal faith were equally maltreated. This amounted to a failure of gigantic proportions. Much ado about nothing.

Men who persuaded, cajoled and pushed the Muslim into a new struggle with his own mind were the liberal modernists who had learnt English, picked up Western education, or gauged the unbelievable benefits of reinterpreting faith in the light of and for the solution of the problems posed by the modern age. They were neither ulema nor maulawis nor doctors passed out by seminaries and madrasas. They were graduates of the universities set up by the British in India or of the British seats of learning, or they were men of fruitful imagination and ripe intelligence, or they were keen observers of the march of thought in Europe, or they were so deeply impressed with British achievements in every field that the passion to imitate them burned in them like an un-

extinguishable lamp. Muslim India was modernized and liberalized and liberated by Sir Sayyid Ahmad Khan, Nawab Abdul Latif Khan, Sayyid Ameer Ali, the Aga Khan, A.K. Fazlul Haq, Abdullah Yusuf Ali, Mian Muhammad Shafi, Mian Fazl-i-Husain, Muhammad Zafrulla Khan, Muhammad Ali Jinnah and Muhammad Iqbal, and their followers. All of them were children of Western enlightenment. All of them were severely criticized by the anti-Western, conservative, traditional groups and leaders. In my own day the Western stream of tendency produced Muhammad Ali Jinnah while the local, vernacular tendency threw up General Ziaul Haq. A slight pause on the mention of these two names in the same sentence should clinch the argument.

Loyalty in this proper context should not be defined as an oath to obey the British viceroy, or a determination to worship the rising sun, or a severe inferiority complex which inflicts all small minds. It should be seen as an avenue provided by history and circumstance on which to march towards the golden arch of intellectual progress and political advance, to appropriate the achievements of those whom destiny imposed upon us as imperial rulers, and to build on these foundations a new structure of thought and society which would be a happy amalgam of past glories and present opportunities.

To admire imperialism is not a weakness. It is a mark of self-confidence as well as of straight thinking. It is an ability to see what good things came to us through the instrumentality of the British, to appreciate their soundness, and to watch their play in our social and intellectual growth. To do this is to observe from a position of strength.

As Muslims we should take note of the fascinating example of Spain where the roles of religion are reversed. Andalusia was ruled by the Moors for much longer than India was by the British. Since the seventeenth century Spanish historians and scholars have been writing in sharp disapproval of Muslim imperialism in their land. But with advancing

maturity has come objectivity, and during the last 50 years several senior historians have questioned the traditional partisan view of the Moorish age of their history. Gradually a new corpus of historical scholarship has appeared in which Spain has begun to acknowledge the signal debt she owes to her medieval Muslim rulers. Those who make this acknowledgement are scholars and writers of international fame. They are neither embarrassed at nor ashamed of what they are doing. Only the brave and the wise see facts as facts and stare at them. The weak and the foolish avert their eyes and prefer their fancies and delusions to the verities of history.

I have written the above few pages to set the attitude of my family in its historical context, and also to emphasize the fact that it was not a rare point of view. The uncommon thing was that the virtues and benefits of British rule were noticed by a rural family from a small place like Kahnuwan, not by an urban family from a large city like Lahore.

Which shows of what uncommon clay Waziruddin was made. His farsighted eye had seen that his family was destined to live under the British for many a day. It was his business to smooth the transition and prepare his sons for the new age. He himself was too old to go to school, but even his half-educated mind (and that too in oriental studies only) grasped the imperative of English education. His contacts with a few English officials and their native staff enabled him to learn a few elementary English words and phrases, but he wanted his sons to receive proper education and be the equal of Englishmen. His first born, Azizuddin, had disappointed him by his lack of interest in studies. He then pinned his hopes on his second son, Ghulam Nabi, and sent him to Batala to the best school the town could offer.

Ghulam Nabi proved to be a better student and a better man than Waziruddin could have conceived in his wildest dreams, though alas! it was not given to him to see the son come to full bloom.

THE NEW EDUCATION

This was the personal and historical background against which we must view Ghulam Nabi's heroic efforts to succeed against heavy odds and unpropitious circumstances. He took a giant step forward when the inspector from Lahore picked him up for higher education. At the same time he almost stumbled when Sharfo made her appearance in the Batala establishment. Two fronts were opened simultaneously in his battle of life. He mobilized his capacity for hard work and exceptional power of concentration on the one (studies) and his resilience and diplomacy on the other (home).

The inspector's choice had cheered Ghulam Nabi. He began to see visions of going to a college and becoming a graduate. But six months later the inspector returned, scrutinized the boy's new record, felt deeply satisfied, summoned him to the headmaster's office, and delivered his verdict. Ghulam Nabi was to prepare himself for admission into the newly-opened medical school in Lahore. The boy received the news with mixed feelings. To go to a medical school and train as a physician was streets ahead of what he had mapped out for himself. He would love to try. But could he do it? His English was good, but was it good enough to master the difficult textbooks of medicine and follow the advanced lectures given by British professors? He had no educated parents or uncles or brothers to advise or help him. He was only 14. His resolve was shaken, and in a rather depressed mood he took his problem to his masters. Soon the news reached the headmaster that his star pupil was entertaining doubts instead of hopes. He picked up the thread where the inspector had left it.

He called a meeting of all the teachers who took Ghulam Nabi's class and asked the boy to appear before it. This full-dress conclave carved the path to be followed by the boy and also undertook to make it even for him. He was

told that if he concentrated on his science subjects and worked as hard as he had been in the past the school would see to it that his English would not lag behind. The medical course would be long and taxing, but at the end of it lay an honourable profession and, if he cared for such things, a lot of money. With his rustic and uneducated background, and at his age, it would have been a hard decision to make and an almost impossible promise to give. But three things came to his rescue: his inborn ambition, his father's passion to see him as an equal of the Englishman, and the confidence his teachers had given him. The board offered him the grace of a week to think the matter over, but he refused the concession. He gave his solemn commitment that he would try for the medical school seat with every thing he had, but on one condition. He must see his father and seek his approval. The proviso was acceptable to the meeting.

On the afternoon of the following Saturday Ghulam Nabi set out for Kahnuwan, and when he arrived two hours later his parents thought that he had come on one of his usual week-end visits. After the evening meal he went to his father's bedroom and related the whole story from the beginning. Waziruddin was not a demonstrative man, but at the end of the narration he embraced the boy and called him his pride. The mother who was also present but only half understood the problem or the prospect planted three kisses on his forehead and each eye and blessed him. Had the couple the magic power to look into the future, the father would have seen the boy as a medical undergraduate with a promise which his professors confirmed and then his own end, and the mother would have previewed the glory of his son at the royal courts of Bahawalpur and Afghanistan. But no human being has possessed that power, and the parents could only anticipate the pleasure of a promise yet to be fulfilled. They were very happy that an auspicious beginning had been made, and there was a twinkle in their eyes when they looked at each other and then at their precious son.

Then Waziruddin told Ghulam Nabi a great deal of the family tradition of oriental medicine, of the uninterrupted tradition of combining medical practice with landholding, of a remote ancestor who had cured Emperor Jahangir when the royal hunter had met an accident while in pursuit of an animal in the Kahnuwan marsh, of another recent great uncle who had been summoned to Batala to treat Sada Kaur, the queen of the territory, of the nobility of the medical profession, of the basic affinity between oriental and Western medicine, and of the requirements of a new age in which modern professions would fare better and command greater respect than petty feudalism.

After this peep into past and future history, Waziruddin made three points. He surprised Ghulam Nabi by telling him that the father's sharp eye had espied a strong streak of compassion in the son's character. He had noticed the boy's sympathy and love for others, his instinctive kindness, his ability to feel the pain of others and his longing to relieve it. This, he said, made him a born physician and surgeon. The remark astonished the boy, but a little introspection persuaded him of its truth. He was kind by nature, and suffering in man or animal caused him agony.

The father went on to make his second comment on the youngster's character. He had been observing him since sending him to school and had been impressed by his growing seriousness of mind and his increasing capacity for hard work. Azizuddin had made his periodical reports. The simple-looking, placid, subservient servants who had attended to his needs had kept the father well informed about their ward's habits, timetable and lifestyle. He knew exactly the number of hours he put in every day, the time he went to bed and the time he was out of it. What sharp eyes these meek servitors had, said Ghulam Nabi to himself. So, Waziruddin concluded, he had no doubt that the boy had in him the intelligence, the sense of responsibility, the perseverance and the grit required to shine in his studies. He was not, he made it clear, saying

this to cheer him up or create false hopes, but to assure him of his ability to fulfil his teachers' expectations. Ghulam Nabi's heart leapt in his breast at these words.

The third point Waziruddin made may have been an afterthought, but it showed his complete trust in the Englishman's wisdom and choice. He said that it had been his ambition all these years to see Ghulam Nabi join the civil service after completing his education. The bearing and authority of the government officials who had visited Kahnuwan had impressed him. To see his son as an equal of the deputy commissioner was perhaps an impossible dream, yet he did not want him to become a low grade functionary. Now, however, the wisdom of the inspector and the school's decision to prepare him to become a doctor had set him thinking anew. For many years to come no Indian would approach the district officer's rank and appointment, but a doctor could at least hope one day to be a civil surgeon and sit next to the deputy commissioner in the durbar. That was it. The ideal was realizable. And lo and behold! it was the British themselves who were inviting, nay pressing, him to join their ranks. Didn't the boy realize what it meant? Honour, respect, esteem, authority, status, the ear of the senior English bureaucracy, perhaps an appointment in Lahore where the Lat Sahib lived, perhaps even a few snatches of his exalted company – a vision which only a handful of Punjabis could even contemplate in 1866.

You must think big, he continued, to become big. Nothing is beyond man's effort if he strives hard and keeps his trust in God in good trim. Waziruddin ended his cheering testament by reminding the boy that in making medicine his profession he would be continuing in a different and better and more modern shape the old tradition of the family. "We have been hakims for 250 years. It is time that you became a doctor, an English hakim. That is God's will. That is the sarkar's decision. That is my wish. It should now become your goal." Ghulam Nabi

bowed his head in thanks to God, in obeisance to his father, and in gratitude to his teachers. It had been so easy to persuade his father, he told himself. He blessed his luck and smiled.

Then the pleased father and the happy son proceeded to the unpleasant realities of life. Waziruddin said with a wry expression that he was *au fait* with Ghulam Nabi's difficulties with Sharfo, that he had no ready-made solution to offer, that Ghulam Nabi could not change his school at this stage, and that the young boy had to handle the sister-in-law delicately and diplomatically but firmly. The servants' reports were encouraging. So far Ghulam Nabi had faced the predicament with courage and tact. He must continue to be brave for another two years. Sharfo could not be put in her place; even her husband had confessed his failure. But she could be put in a situation where her own conduct might embarrass her and slowly force a change in her treatment of Ghulam Nabi. She was a new bride, young in age, unused to worldly affairs, and far from Kaithan. Time might blunt her sharp ways and reconcile her to the complications of married life and family relationships. Ghulam Nabi must promise never to be rude to her, never to offend her, and never to offer her an occasion for complaint. Things must never come to a boil. "Make some sacrifices", he counselled, "and remember that no sacrifice is too great for the attainment of what you have decided to achieve."

Ghulam Nabi, who knew Sharfo far better than Waziruddin, did not elaborate on his problems with the woman. It was not meet for the youngsters to speak ill of the elders even if invited to do so by their father and even when such plain speaking was required by the matter under discussion. Family culture disallowed it. Ghulam Nabi made no reference to his painful home life in Batala, nor uttered a word of criticism of his sister-in-law, nor mentioned his brother's sufferings at the hands of his wife. In a few well-chosen words, which he had rehearsed in Batala in

anticipation of this conversation, he assured his father that Sharfo's existence could not shake his resolve to finish school with as many laurels as he could win, that it would not trouble him so long as he had the blessings of his father, that it should not stand in his way if he was sincere to his purpose, obedient to his brother and correct and proper to his sister-in-law. "I give you my word of honour", he said, "that whatever happens you will never hear a word of complaint from me or a whiff of bad news from Batala. Let us now talk about the other problem." With a hint of moisture in his eyes, Waziruddin placed his right hand on the boy's left shoulder and said "I knew I had a good son in you".

The other problem lay nearer home and was in some ways more serious and long term. In the first flush of her excitement, Zuhra, Ghulam Nabi's mother, had raised no objection to the prospect of her son's going away to Lahore for five long years. While the father and son were sorting out the difficulties posed by medical study and Sharfo, Zuhra's thoughts ran wild on another theme. Since the day she had agreed to send her son to Batala she had assumed that he would come back to her after his schooling. There is no logic in a mother's heart, only blind love. It had not occurred to her that a school-leaver son would not return to Kahnuwan to look after the lands and practise *hikmat*. The worst situation that she had contemplated was Ghulam Nabi's getting a job in Batala, like Azizuddin, in which case he would not be too far away, and in any case within visiting distance and time. These hopes were receding. She had counted each year since she had agreed to send him to school. Till today she had been happy at the thought that there were only two more years to go.

And now the joy of the news of her son's scholastic success had come intermixed with the sorrow of the certainty of a long, too long, separation. Two more years at the Batala school, and then five more at the medical school. The prospects of a reunion seemed to vanish into an ever-

receding arch of time. The woman in her rejoiced; the mother in her wept.

Father and son knew the chatelaine too well not to realize her agony. They appealed to her in the name of everything they could bring to their mind: Ghulam Nabi's career, the good name of the family, the honour of Kahnuwan, the chances of the two younger brothers' following the example of the educated elder brother, and so on. The mother cried, hugged the departing son again and again, protested with arguments and tears, but finally surrendered to the glow of pride in her husband's face and the glint of hope in her son's eyes. All mothers have sacrificed for the sake of their children' future and happiness. Zuhra accepted the fate of her kind with resignation and gave her consent. Ghulam Nabi jumped into her arms, momentarily forgot his serious demeanour, felt like the eternal child in the lap of the eternal mother, kissed her, played with the necklace hanging from her neck and the bangles around her wrists, made her laugh, and did not leave her till her sad thoughts were fully dissipated in the consideration of her son's pleasure and her husband's contentment.

Next day Ghulam Nabi left for Batala. Simultaneously a string of orders was issued from Kahnuwan by Waziruddin. The servants who attended Ghulam Nabi in Batala were told to be even more solicitous of his weal. Azizuddin was asked to act, to the uttermost limits of his capacity, as a buffer between his wife and his brother. Poor Azizuddin! The people of Kahnuwan were told to pray for the future of the master's student son. Men and women working in the haveli were instructed to provide the forlorn mother with cheerful company. Prayers were said in the family mosque for the success of the boy.

Ghulam Nabi used to tell my father that during the next two years he slaved on his books like a man possessed. On his return from Kahnuwan he told his headmaster and teachers of

his father's consent to the school's plans for his future. His preceptors were pleased, as much by the news as by the boy's determination. But the boy warned the school, in very respectful terms, that what was at stake was not only his own ability and capacity for hard work but also the honour of the institution. The teachers were as much on trial as the taught. The school took the warning in a good spirit and put its shoulder to the wheel which was to shape the future of the plucky student.

At home Ghulam Nabi refined his technique of keeping Sharfo at an arm's length. He withdrew further into himself and his books. He talked to Sharfo when he was talked to or when no alternative was in sight. When she was rude he kept his temper. To her frowns he set face to face his smile, to her seething anger his placid evenness, to her provocative shouting his correct neutrality. He spent long hours at school, confiding in one or two teachers. They understood his predicament and comforted him. Azizuddin was as affectionate as he could be in the presence of his wife. The servants who doted upon him redoubled their efforts to make his life as easy as it lay in their hands. On Sundays, he repaired to the headmaster's house, telling Sharfo that he needed coaching and telling the headmaster that he needed peace and quiet. The woman was glad to have him out of the house for the day; and the teacher was happy to provide a sanctuary to his harassed ward. Once a month he visited Kahnuwan to see his parents and play with his two younger brothers who were now seven and four respectively. He had no playmates in Kahnuwan which he had left at a time when young boys begin to mix and to establish relationships. The two youngsters, his brothers, were his only friends. One Sunday in the month was the only holiday he allowed himself, but even that not in its entirety: the journey to and from Kahnuwan was spent with the books. At least four working hours were salvaged.

In Azizuddin's home one lamp shone long and even till late into the night. The oil in the stem fed the wick. The flame licked the chimney. The light brightened the book. The page illuminated the mind. The boy read on till after the midnight hour, garnering knowledge, absorbing facts, honing the habit of hard work, building a character out of necessity, devotion, patience, nerves of steel and unbreakable resolve. The youngster was maturing into a man at breakneck speed before his time. Nothing mattered but his studies and the goal set before him. The inhospitable and chafing home life whipped his determination into a frenetic and implacable will-power. With grinding teeth and a stout heart he consigned his surroundings to oblivion, his youthful fancies to the well of forgetfulness, and his frustrations to the Lethean waters.

Time was an obedient servant in the presence of this ferocious concentration. The two years of classes 9 and 10 passed more quickly than he had feared. In 1868, at the age of 16, Ghulam Nabi cleared the first major hurdle of his academic career, the matriculation or entrance examination. What really buoyed him up was the high marks he got in his two bugbears, science and English. His teachers were highly pleased, congratulated him on his success, and complimented themselves on good shepherding. His name went on to the board of honour hanging in the hall as the outstanding student of the year.

Azizuddin was happy on two counts. It was heartening to see his brother aglow with happiness and to recollect that it was *in his house* that the success had been won. It was also good to entertain the hope that now with the young boy out of the house the behaviour of his wife might improve. With the departure of Ghulam Nabi and his servants from Batala the population of the house was reduced to two persons, he and Sharfo. Perhaps better days lay ahead and the couple would live in peace. This hope was unfulfilled and Sharfo, helpless

before her uncontrollable temper, continued to grumble and quarrel until, several years later, she drove her husband into the arms of another woman, in fact a girl, and even afterwards when she lived for many years with her two sons in the home of Ghulam Nabi as his dependent her irascibility and pugnacity did not abate.

The man whose joy sought but touched no limits was Waziruddin, and next to him his wife. The father's happiness outdid the son's. He measured his son's achievement in the context of the historical time, past and future, and of family tradition, past and present.

In the past the family had done reasonably well in education and money-making. Everyone had received instruction in Persian, Arabic, elementary history, some theology and much tibb. This was exceptional in the rural society of that age, but some unknown ancestor with more wisdom than his elders had founded the tradition, affluence had helped and the profession of tibb had encouraged such acquisition. Generations had been educated in oriental learning, and this was a matter of satisfaction.

But the coming of the British had broken the old mould. Nothing could be cast in it now except obsolete ideas, narrow minds, low-paid employment, regressive thinking, and the tiring and useless habit of looking back with pride without looking forward with hope. The world had changed in Kahnuwan, as in every other town and city in India. The tide of transformation rode high and entered every nook and cranny. The British knew the secret of prolonging and making more acceptable an imperial sway which shared neither the subject's faith, nor his culture, nor his race, nor his climate – a secret neither used by nor known to the imperial Mughals and Afghans: education. Modern education was now the catalyst, the yeast, the mould that would change the intellectual chemistry, and with it much more, of the Indians.

Waziruddin had had the prescience to plumb the tide of change and the wisdom to flow with it. The first harvest of his decision was now a "matriculate".

What brought the cup of his happiness almost to its brim was the line of education his son had chosen to pursue. In a few years the boy would be at the end of the road, but not as a mere Bachelor of Arts (though that too was a rare achievement in those days) to disappear in the lower echelons of bureaucratic hierarchy but as a medical graduate to be a part of an honoured and honourable profession. He may or may not make a lot of money, but he would be able to look the Englishman in the eye and talk to him in his own tongue. As a matter of fact, Ghulam Nabi did both. He retired as a highly-placed physician and a wealthy man, and on his way up stared down two senior British administrators.

Waziruddin was happy, very happy, but Zuhra's heart beat even faster with unconfined joy. She had suffered much from long separation. She had missed her child as only a woman can. Since Azizuddin's marriage and the tyranny of Sharfo her suffering had turned to agony. She felt as if she had, in her own lifetime and by her own will, condemned her favourite son to go and live with a heartless stepmother. The supreme torture was that she could not take him back. Education or no education, future or no future, she would not have let the boy spend a minute in Batala had her husband not been so insistent. She had submitted to him not only because she was a little afraid of him but for the sake of the boy's career. Yet she had spent agonizing days, missing her son beyond all sense of language. Many nights had come and gone without sleep. Often she had wept in the solitude of the dark hours, when hot tears had welled up and flown free down her dusky cheeks, and stabs of pain, deep and unbearable, penetrated her heart. Now she rejoiced in proportion to her past suffering. At long last her son was free from Sharfo's clutches. A wave of inexpressible relief swept over her.

Soon the wave receded at the thought that Ghulam Nabi was not returning to Kahnuwan. He would be going even farther away, to Lahore, for his medical studies. But this was a momentary relapse. There were brighter prospects on the horizon. Ghulam Nabi would have his own home in Lahore (she could not bear to let him live in the school hostel). No Sharfo would intrude upon the even tenor of his life. She herself would go and live with her son whenever and for as long as she desired. The prize at the end of *this* separation was worth any sacrifice. A doctor son, living in magnificent independence, free to come and go, perhaps taking her with him to wherever he worked. She dreamed, and the dreams were good.

She was still indulging in these pleasures when her mind took another turn and nightmares succeeded the dreams. What about her two younger sons? Ghulam Qadir was now nine and Ghulam Muhammad six. Ghulam Qadir was attending the local primary school and in a year's time would finish with it, and in all probability follow in the footsteps of Ghulam Nabi and leave for Batala. For Batala! Her gorge rose at the thought. Batala meant Sharfo, and that should not be allowed to happen. Knowing that Waziruddin, ever so keen on educating his sons and now greatly encouraged by Ghulam Nabi's success, would insist on sending Ghulam Qadir to the high school, she made up her mind there and then to ask Ghulam Nabi to take Ghulam Qadir with him to Lahore after one year and get him admitted to a high school somewhere near his residence.

Ghulam Muhammad presented a double problem. He was only six but had already demonstrated his dislike for the printed word. A year ago he had been ordered by his father to accompany Ghulam Qadir to the primary school, and the teachers had been asked to keep an eye on him and give him special attention. The young boy had obeyed his father, confused his teachers, disappointed his brother, and persisted

in looking at all academic exertion with imperious contempt. He played the truant too often. When in school he looked through his teachers instead of listening to them. He passed on his homework to his elder brother. He refused to learn reading and writing. He was a wastrel in the making.

This frightened Waziruddin and worried Zuhra. They did not know how to handle him. This inability distressed them even more because Ghulam Muhammad had an extraordinarily tender temperament. He was soft spoken, mild of temper, innocent of any guile, intelligent beyond his years, supremely obedient, and the most loving of all the brothers. He liked people. He liked talking to those he knew intimately. He always wore a smile as if the world amused him. He loved games. Watching his father play chess with his friends he had come to recognize and name the pieces on the board and to pick up some of the elementary moves. He was very far from being dull. His mind worked well. His eyes shone with intelligence. He was respectful to all elders. He showed no signs of being spoilt by that extra affection and care which is the happy lot of the youngest child. He was a perfectly normal boy. But he would not study. His father could, when he chose, be stern, hard and sharp. He tried to threaten and browbeat the recalcitrant boy, and failed. He spoke to him in kindly accents and phrases as soft as down, and failed. He argued with him as one adult to another, pretending that he was 16 or 26 and not 6, and failed. Is my youngest son going to be my sorest heartbreak, he wondered, and he fretted with the desperation of the strong man's failure to vanquish the weak.

Caught in the cul-de-sac of failure, Waziruddin decided t let Ghulam Nabi deal with the situation. He had confidence in Ghulam Nabi's young wisdom, serious outlook on life and the quality of foresight. With his incorrigibly high opinion of the British, he hoped that the English teachers of the ALOE school had not only taught Ghulam Nabi a new language and modern

science but also imparted to him something of their race's gift of establishing new human relationships and breaking in the unruly by persuasion and example. Waziruddin also knew how close the two brothers were. Ghulam Nabi loved his youngest brother without stint or limit. This was a nexus contrived by nature; no one had told him to give his heart to the youngster. There was a bond between the two which drew them together like a magnet when Ghulam Nabi was in Kahnuwan in the long vacations or shorter holidays and which drew a greater strength from forced separation when Ghulam Nabi was away in Batala. Though he was not destined to see it, Waziruddin's decision to leave Ghulam Muhammad in Ghulam Nabi's hands was not a solution but a triumph.

The summer of 1868 was a stirring time for the Waziruddin family. Ghulam Nabi returned from Batala in April after taking his matriculation examination. The result came by post two months later, and a ripple of delight circled out from the household to the town. Then plans began to be made for his education in Lahore. Preparations were taken in hand far in advance of his departure. In August Waziruddin went to Lahore to see for himself the city where his son was to train in medicine.

He was struck by its size, wide roads, large buildings and the noise and commotion. He visited the medical school and reconnoitred its suburbs for a proper place for Ghulam Nabi to live in. On his return he told many tales of strange things he had seen in Lahore to his wife and to the people of Kahnuwan. They were duly impressed. Some of them envied Ghulam Nabi who was going to live there. In a few a desire was born to see the great city where so many educated people lived, where many spoke a new tongue, where a large number of Englishmen were to be seen, and where the all-powerful sarkar had its home.

During these months the problem of Ghulam Muhammad was raised, discussed in long family sessions, and finally

solved. Ghulam Nabi had had an inkling from his regular visits to Kahnuwan that Ghulam Muhammad was not studious, but now that he was given a detailed report of his allergy to books he was stunned. The shock was not one of anger but of surprise and sadness. He had been infatuated with the boy since his birth, and the sentiment had waxed as the baby had grown up. The 10-year difference in their ages had not made intimacy difficult. They were always together, roaming the lanes and streets, walking through the fields, playing hide-and-seek in the expanses of their house, chattering of inconsequential things, gossiping, laughing, sharing the same jokes, telling stories, recalling previous get-togethers. The senior giving an account of his life in Batala, omitting everything that was bleak or hurtful, concentrating on his studies and teachers and school friends, impressing the young one quite unconsciously with his proficiency in English, mimicking a few of his British teachers, passing on some of the fascination in learning new facts of geography and science. The junior brought him up to date with the developments in Kahnuwan, regaling him with reports of visitors and family reunions in the haveli and weddings and quarrels and deaths and births in the town, complaining of his boredom with his own school, inquiring why he could not go to Batala and enjoy the exciting schooling and partake in its pleasures and thrills. Over the years these confidences, reports and exchanges had brought the two brothers even closer.

Ghulam Nabi was only 16 when his father told him of his difficulties with Ghulam Muhammad, but his years were no measure of his intelligence bestowed by nature and his ability to look at a problem in the round and give it concentrated, serious attention. He realized that he knew Ghulam Muhammad better than did Waziruddin. The 6-year old had not confided in his father for the simple reason that the line of communication was blocked. The child did not know how to take his problems to the aged father and make him feel the

core of his discontent. The father was more intent on educating the child and on expecting that he would turn out to be another Ghulam Nabi than on understanding his problems, recognizing that no two brothers were exact copies of each other, and that a world of difference separated the primary school of Kahnuwan and the ALOE school of Batala. He was consumed with the noble ambition of educating his sons, but he was no psychologist.

Ghulam Nabi read the mind of Ghulam Muhammad like a well-printed clear-type book. The youngster was not inferior and yet suffered from an inferiority complex. His hero was Ghulam Nabi, and he wanted to be like him. But he had been sent to a poor school. He was not receiving that wholehearted attention from his father which the latter gave to Ghulam Nabi. He did not hate books. How could he when he wanted to emulate Ghulam Nabi? He was frustrated. He did not know how to convey to his father his inarticulate wishes which he himself did not understand fully, his half-formed ambition to be like Ghulam Nabi, his dislike of the local school but not of all schools, his frustration at his separation from his hero, his great love for his brother who lived elsewhere, his distress at being misunderstood. His thoughts were longing for a tongue. He had no tongue at the age of six.

Ghulam Nabi became his tongue. When he sat with his father and mother to decide Ghulam Muhammad's future he argued like an adult addressing adults, He spoke with deep respect but strong passion of the child's feelings, emotions, wishes, disappointments and difficulties. He was too modest to claim or even indicate most indirectly that he was the boy's hero. But he insisted, in phrases which could not be misunderstood, that Ghulam Muhammad was a nice child with normal reactions and responses and average intelligence and ability. Given sympathy and better academic surroundings he could be made to take his studies seriously. "I

know my brother inside out", continued Ghulam Nabi, with a growing ring of confidence in his words as he warmed to the theme. "I also love him very much, and he is attached to me in an equal degree. I can enter his mind, and he confides in me often and unreservedly. If I have your permission, I should like to take him with me to Lahore."

"Hai Allah, he too!" cried out Zuhra, the words rose from the pain of a mother's heart.

"Yes, Ammanji, he too", was the polite but firm reply of the son. "You let me go to Batala, didn't you? I know how much you suffered. But, look what Batala has made of me. Nothing in this world is gained without paying some price. Please let him come with me. We will be together. He will go to a good school. I will coach him myself. Don't be scared. One of the servants will accompany him and stay at the school and bring him back. He will behave properly. I take full responsibility for him. And, Ammanji, you can come and stay with us for a few months every year. There are no more babies to hold you here. Please, please, try this experiment for one year, and if at the end of it you are not satisfied and want him back he will come to you."

He went on like this for a few minutes. He had a persuasive tongue and was given to choose his words with care and enunciate them with clarity. The mother was won over. Waziruddin took a deep breath of elation. Ghulam Nabi's eloquence had been aimed at the mother, not the father, whom he found so determined on educating Ghulam Muhammad that talking to him would have been like preaching to the converted. The matter was settled after a few discussions and the sorting out of details.

A half-hearted protest came from Ghulam Qadir who was to be left alone in Kahnuwan. But he did not make an issue of it. In fact, the new arrangements were to his advantage. He was a studious boy and Ghulam Muhammad had been a distraction. He was now to be relieved of the

responsibility of looking after his younger brother in the school. He was glad that this handful was now being passed on to Ghulam Nabi. He also looked forward to a few trips to Lahore, and at the end of another year to join the brothers in Lahore to continue his post-primary education.

When these plans were announced to Ghulam Muhammad he reacted favourably. The prospects of parting from his mother and leaving Kahnuwan saddened him as they would have any child of his age. But his cheerful temperament and the desire to be with Ghulam Nabi helped to turn his thoughts to a happy contemplation of the years to come. There was much to expect and live for, and little to regret and miss. Separation from the mother was the only heavy burden he would have to carry. But he received a solemn promise that she would not only visit him in Lahore at short and regular intervals but also come and stay for as long as she could manage. This pledge removed the highest obstacle. The father would come to Lahore too, though he could not afford to be away from Kahnuwan for too long. The plus points were very positive. He would live with the brother whom he loved with the devotion of an acolyte, go to a great new city which was said to be many times the size of Batala itself, attend a really good school, perhaps be like Ghulam Nabi which was his half-formed, half-conscious ambition and had been so since gaining consciousness. He was happy and brandished his new future like a banner of victory before his local friends.

LAHORE VISITED

In September 1868 the entire family travelled to Lahore by slow stages through Batala and Amritsar. Ghulam Nabi's school had looked after all formalities concerning his admission to the Punjab School of Medicine. It had gone further in being helpful. An Indian Christian teacher had

arranged through a friend in Lahore for a house to be hired for a few weeks. Everything was turning out well.

At the end of the last stage of their journey they arrived in Lahore in the evening and were taken to the *chabara* in Anarkali where they were to lodge. They were tired and hungry. The servants brought in some cooked food from the bazaar downstairs. The food was nothing compared to what was prepared at their home. But they fed themselves and retired early.

Next morning they found themselves in a different world. Lahore still carried the scars of recent Sikh vandalism and anarchy and a few more marks of the Afghan spoliation of a hundred years ago. The British had been here a mere 19 years, but the city had already begun to wear a different garb The old part of the city enclosed by the Mughal ramparts stood more or less intact. The new "civil station", the modern section outside the old inner city which the British established and then embellished in every major town they conquered, was taking birth. Old roads were being renovated and widened, new ones laid out, schools opened, offices established, a brand new cantonment founded, large buildings planned, and the whole place given a new look.

The medical school, which was to be elevated to the status and name of King Edward Medical College in 1906, had been opened in 1860 and housed in a few buildings erected in the middle of a large open tract of land on the eastern side of Anarkali. It was in a double-storeyed house in the Anarkali bazaar that the Waziruddin family was temporarily housed. It lived on the first floor with a row of shops beneath it. That is how the whole bazaar was laid out: business downstairs, residence upstairs. When the menfolk went out to see the sights or visit the school, Zuhra ran the house and spent many hours at the window from where, ensconced behind the chicks, she looked down at the bazaar and wondered at the hurly-burly, the noise and the crowds of the market.

There were shops of all sizes dealing in an unimaginable variety of things. Most of the bigger ones sold cloth and groceries. Others were run by tailors, leather workers, goldsmiths, shoemakers and general merchants. At some distance she could see one or two eating places. She pushed out the chick a little and craned her neck but was unable to see the end of the street. It was a large place, many times bigger and longer than the high street of Kahnuwan.

Waziruddin and his three sons hired a carriage and with one servant in attendance drove through the old city, cut across it to reach the famous Mughal mosque and beyond it the river Ravi. On other days they explored the modern suburbs and the nearby villages like Mozang, Mianmir, Ichchra and some others beyond the Chauburji. On one side of Anarkali lay the old city; on all others were a few scattered buildings which had survived Sikh destruction and green fields and a few new structures, most of them incomplete, being put up by the British.

But more important than this sightseeing was the business which had brought the family to Lahore. Waziruddin went to the School of Medicine with Ghulam Nabi, surveyed the place where his son was to spend the next five years, talked to the few Indian lecturers in some detail and exchanged some short sentences with the European members of the staff (he had picked up some elementary conversational English from his British touring visitors in Kahnuwan and from Ghulam Nabi). The Principal informed him that his son's admission papers were complete save the signatures of the father and the son.

The formality over, Waziruddin brought out his wallet to pay the prescribed fees. To his astonishment the Principal told him that the boy had been awarded a scholarship by the Punjab Government on his academic record and the unprecedentedly strong recommendation of his school, that it was generous enough to cover his tuition fee, laboratory charges, union subscription, full hostel

expenses, and a monthly pocket money of two rupees. Both father and son were taken aback by the discovery. Ghulam Nabi was immensely pleased but wondered why his school had not told him of it. Waziruddin's pride was marred by a misconception. From his limited knowledge of school education and what he had been told by Ghulam Nabi, his impression was that scholarships were only given to those who found the fees beyond their means. The uneducated village squire took it as a slur on his name and an insult to his long purse that somebody else should offer to defray the expenses of his son's education. He made it clear that his pride was hurt and he could not agree to such an arrangement.

The Principal, who had spent the last eight years in teaching medicine and studying the Indian mind and had also received a full report on his new ward's school record and family background, smoothed the ruffled plumes of the zamindar by explaining the difference between scholarship for excellence and scholarship for helping the poor under a means test. And, he added, it was not "somebody else" who would finance his son's education but the British sarkar of which he had confessed to be an admirer. The arguments seemed to satisfy Waziruddin, but he was still loathe to see his son receiving free education, and stuck to the point with his feudal stubbornness. (In Kahnuwan he paid the fees of several students at the primary school who came from poor families, mostly his own land labourers; hence his belief that all scholarships were meant for the indigent.)

The Principal understood the mentality of his interlocutor, and suggested that Waziruddin should pay Rs. 25 a month to the school for the five years that his son would be there. This money, he explained, would enable one deserving student who could not afford to pay his way to qualify as a doctor. Waziruddin agreed to this. A new 5-year scholarship was endowed and directly awarded to a Hindu hopeful who had very high marks but not enough money. The demands of both

pride and official requirement were met. The zamindar had his way; the school was richer by one endowment.

Towards the end of the meeting Waziruddin told the Principal that his son would not be living in the school hostel but in his own rented quarters. This time it was the Principal who came near to losing his temper. He made it clear to Waziruddin that every student must live either in the hostel or at his parents' home, and nowhere else, because the school was responsible for his moral welfare. It was with some difficulty and through the intervention of two native faculty members that the Principal was persuaded to accept the proposition that the new entrant's private and moral life would be effectively supervised and fully taken care of if he lived in a private house with one or two brothers, three servants, a regularly visiting mother and an occasionally visiting father. His scruples were removed when he was told that the house would be within ten minutes' walk from the school and open to unannounced inspection by any member of the teaching staff at any hour.

Everything settled to his satisfaction, Waziruddin shook the Principal by the hand and, while still holding it in his grasp, said to the Englishman, "Sir, the boy is now in your charge. Treat him as you wish. Do to him whatever you want. But make him a good man and a good physician. I don't want anything more. I won't stand for anything less." With these words he walked out of the office with his arm around Ghulam Nabi's shoulders.

When they were outside the school gate, he turned to his son and warned him, "Ghulam Nabi, you heard what I said to your Principal before leaving. Never forget those words. He is now your second father. Obey him as you would obey me. Do his bidding whatever it be. Don't bring shame upon me. Look at my grey beard. Its honour rests in your hands. When you leave the school be sure it is proud of you, you of it, and I of you." The boy moved his head

vertically keeping time with each staccato sentence and murmured his solemn commitment that the will of the father shall be done.

Five years later the will of the father was done in a brilliant performance, but he himself was dead just about a year before the consummation of his highest ambition.

On returning home Zuhra was told that all had been arranged, that her son was now on his way to becoming a doctor, and that the head of the school was a *bara sharif adami* (a man of sterling virtue) in whose hands her son's future was eminently safe. After thus reassuring her, he narrated, with some excitement and still lingering astonishment, how the school wanted to pay for *his* son's education ("But how could you agree to such humiliating arrangement?" she broke in. "Are we so poor that we can't pay his fee?"), how he had spurned the offer, and instead had promised to pay the fee for five years of another boy who was poor but bright. The mother was glad and prayed for that poor boy.

Then she called Ghulam Nabi close to her, and holding his face in her two hands she said to him, "My son, I want you to take a vow right now and give me your promise that never shall you in the school or outside tell that Hindu student or let him know through anyone else that your father's money is financing his education. It will embarrass him. When one gives, one forgets. When one receives, one never forgets. That, my son, is what our God has told us. Now you give me your promise and please your mother." Ghulam Nabi gave his word, and kept it all his life, not even telling his sons the name of that Hindu class-fellow.

The academic session of the medical school did not begin for another week. This gave Waziruddin just enough time to arrange Ghulam Muhammad's admission to a school and to find permanent accommodation for the brothers.

If one enters the present-day Anarkali bazaar from the southern end (which later connected it with the Mall) and

walked up towards the Lahori Gate for about 200 yards one finds a street branching off to the right. It is a short stretch, and at the end of it on the left stands today the gate of the medical college, and on the right another street leads to the Nila Gumbad. A member of the school staff lived in this street and knew that some houses or their portions were available on rent. Waziruddin inspected everything in the market and selected the ground floor of a large house which consisted of four rooms, a courtyard in the back with a kitchen and a latrine, two outhouses for the servants, and one veranda between the living rooms and the street and another between them and the courtyard. The rooms were of a good size but unfurnished. The accommodation was shown to Zuhra who approved it. During the next week the house was furnished by purchasing beds, tables, chairs, lamps and lanterns, the necessary beddings, and pots and pans. The owner lived on the first and second floors but had his own separate entrance into the building. The house was barely a 5-minute walk from the school.

The street was quiet and consisted of private residences of well-to-do people who kept it clean. The shops of the Anarkali bazaar were less than a hundred yards away, to the great convenience of the servants. It later came to be called Dhani Ram Street, and in the 1930s and 1940s several of its shops dealt in crockery to which crowded the gentry of Lahore in search of the finest available china and crystal, and at its Anarkali end one found two or three tailoring establishments of repute.

The search for a school for Ghulam Muhammad was short and quick. By a happy coincidence the provincial education department had a year earlier opened a school in the road which swung right from the southern end of the Anarkali bazaar and petered out near a mound a furlong away. This was the future Katcheri Road on which within 25 years or less were to be built the Oriental College, the Law College and the

Punjab University Senate House. The bare mound was the future site of the prestigious Government College. From the house rented for the boys the school was less than ten minutes' walk even for the little Ghulam Muhammad. It was a government school, the building was new, the facilities adequate, and the teachers in search of students. There was no difficulty in getting the boy admitted. The headmaster, an Englishman, insisted on making sure that the new boy had a decent place to live and, the parents being away, a proper guardian. He was a difficult man to satisfy, and the matter was only settled after a letter was brought from the Principal of the medical school summarizing the case of Ghulam Nabi and certifying that Ghulam Muhammad was his younger brother and would live with him in a nearby street, and the boys would be regularly visited for extended periods by one or both parents, and that a member of the medical school staff would occasionally look in to see if everything was all right.

This school, passing through various stages and incarnations and twice changing its location, ended up much later as the Central Model School, the only of its kind in the province.

Waziruddin had been around a good deal since his arrival in Lahore but Zuhra had been shut up in the *chabara* except for one short visit to inspect the house rented for the boys. In Kahnuwan she was used to moving about in a large haveli, visiting her relatives and friends and the families of her agricultural labour, and occasionally going out to her fields. Lahore bored her with her restricted movements and the tiny little upper storey which was her domain. In two or three days the charm and excitement of gazing out at the bazaar down below was gone. She felt like a prisoner, and she could not yet shift to the new accommodation which was still being furnished.

She told Waziruddin that she wanted to get out and see a bit of Lahore. At first he was totally opposed to the idea.

No gentlewoman roamed the roads of Lahore. It was just not done. She told him that she was not a gentlewoman of Lahore, whatever that meant, but a freedom-loving female of Kahnuwan. If the ladies of Lahore did not want to see their own city so much the worse for them. She must go out, and it was better that she did so now in the company of her husband rather than later with her boys alone. She was a woman of character and she insisted with a strong will. Waziruddin wilted and gave way.

A closed carriage was ordered with chicks instead of thick curtains on the windows. Luckily it was autumn and the weather was mild; she would not suffocate in the narrow confines of the contraption. Father, mother and the three boys got in, one servant stood on a wooden board attached to the back of the carriage, the driver sat atop in the front, and the Kahnuwan family set out to see the metropolis which was being reshaped and expanded by its new white masters.

They went around a good part of the two cities: the old, crowded, narrow-laned walled town which had its own charm and smells and crowds and the beauty of its carved wooden doors, windows and trellises; and the old-new outer spaces with their Mughal structures and gardens as well as the roads and buildings made or being made by the British. All were thrilled by the variety and size of what lay before them. Zuhra was excited beyond measure. Her ahs! and ohs! and ouihs! of admiration and wonder were uttered with matronly reserve but with enthusiasm. They ate their lunch in the carriage and the excursion continued. When the party returned home just before the sunset prayer the mother was happy. She was the first woman from Kahnuwan and the first of my family to visit Lahore and see its sights. How many tales she must have stored in her memory to tell her people back home!

What my elders saw that day outside the walls was the British Lahore in the making. It was a mere nineteen years

that the sahib had been in the city but the stamp of his innovation and determination was already visible in the new roads and buildings.

Emerging from the old city they passed by some old Sikh barracks and other buildings which had been put to various uses. Waziruddin had heard of the Anarkali legend and also seen the Anarkali complex put up in Batala by Sher Singh. His curiosity was now aroused and he wanted to see the ill-starred royal beloved's last resting place. He directed the driver to take them there, only to discover that eleven years earlier the British had converted the mausoleum into a church, and this depressed him. Nor was he allowed to enter the building. Their next stop was the Tollinton Market where only four years ago the great Punjab Exhibition had been held; the building shone with new paint, and several remnants and reminders of the grand show were still there to enchant the visitors, particularly Zuhra who was thrilled to see some khéses, painted legs of bedposts and other artefacts from the countryside and felt proud of the art and workmanship of her people.

In those days the road on which the Market was situated was known as Lawrence Road; its rechristening as The Mall was still 25 years away. The Lawrence Road of later years was then called Montpellier Road. Driving from the Market towards the canal they saw some old constructions, several fields under cultivation and many vacant expanses of land until they came to the vast Lawrence Garden and were dazzled by the two imperial monuments put there only very recently: the Roman-style Lawrence Hall and the Montgomery Hall. They had never seen anything like them. They were fresh from the hands of the architects and the builders. Their architectural style was novel and their setting in the park added to their beauty. Waziruddin, already an Anglophile, saw in them the impress of British authority, and gazed at them for a long time, explaining to the family what they stood for. Across the road they could only get a glimpse

through an imposing gate of the portico and a part of one wing of the Government House, and Waziruddin told Zuhra that it was there that the sarkar lived, and then elaborated that the sarkar was the lord of all the revenue and other government functionaries who came occasionally to Kahnuwan. She was duly impressed.

It has always interested me to ponder over the physical development of Lahore and how the last four generations of my family watched its birth, growth, blossoming, and degeneration. My great grandfather saw the first few buildings which adorned the new imperial capital: the Tollinton Market, the Lawrence and Montgomery Halls, the Lawrence Garden, the Railway Station, the Government House, and the earliest modern roads. My grandfather saw all these as a very young man; and during his student days at the Punjab Medical School were built the Young Men's Christian Association headquarters on the Mall (1870) and the Mayo Hospital (1871). In his later occasional visits to the city he saw the creation of the Mayo School of Arts (1875) with its additions (1890), the Gothic fabric of the Government College on the mound and the Punjab University Senate Hall (both in 1876), the Faletti's Hotel on Egerton Road (1880), the Aitchison Chiefs' College (1886-88), the Ewing Hall (Forman Christian College) in the Nila Gumbad (1889), the Town Hall (1890), the Gol Bagh which surrounded the walled city, and the first two bookshops, the Punjab Religious Book Society store (1860s) and Messrs. Rama Krishna Bookshop (1894). My father saw all later additions, official and private, notably the row of noble edifices bordering the Mall, the Chief Court, the Nedou's Hotel, the Dayanand Anglo-Vernacular College, Dyal Singh College, and more roads and dozens of impressive private mansions. In 1937 I saw the completion of the last official building: the Punjab Legislative Assembly Hall, and a little later the new campus of the

Forman Christian College. The building of the imperial Lahore was complete.

In 88 years the British had converted the area outside the walled city, much of it destroyed during the Sikh anarchy and the rest in a derelict state, into a glittering new metropolis. Alas! this glory lasted exactly as long as those who had created it were physically present in the city. The ravages of partition, the departure of the Hindu and Sikh owners of the private buildings, the advent of the Muslim refugees, the indifference and unconcern of the new rulers, and the cruel apathy and negligence of the citizens of the city itself, combined to destroy irretrievably the gleam and lustre and elegance that was once Lahore. My great grandfather saw its foundations being laid; it was left to me, the last of the family, to witness the ravages of the change and mourn the loss.

Three days later the family moved into the rented house. Everyone felt more at ease. The rooms were large and airy, and above all instead of a narrow piece of roof they had a good size courtyard. A generous supply of linen was bought and several quilts. Winter was not far away, and guests could be expected, if not soon certainly in the months and years to come. More utensils were ordered and cushions for the chairs and durries for all the rooms. Other items of daily or occasional use would be acquired as the settling in proceeded.

Then one day a strange plan took shape in Zuhra's mind. From the window of the Anarkali *chabara* she had seen people shopping. They were all men. Rarely, very rarely, did she espy a woman among them. She had never shopped before; in Kahnuwan the retail merchants sent their stocks-in-trade to the inner apartments of the haveli for the zamindar's harem to inspect, choose and buy. But then there were no such shops there, and the sight of them and their being so close tempted her. She told Ghulam Nabi of her wish; he was struck by its novelty but raised no objection. Ghulam Qadir and Ghulam Muhammad were

excited at the prospect of visiting a shop and discovering what it contained and how the customers chose and bought.

At the evening meal, quite unconsciously and in complete innocence, Ghulam Muhammad let the secret out. Waziruddin first dismissed the idea with a derisory laugh and continued to eat. He was still masticating the morsel when Ghulam Nabi said, "Ammanji wants to go to the bazaar, and so do I and my two brothers." The pater familias was outraged. So his family had been conspiring behind his back. He let his authority speak in three stern words, "This won't happen." Waziruddin had never, since his marriage day, inspired fear in Zuhra's heart, only commanded respect by his personality. Free of fear but full of verve Zuhra decided to take on her husband. This was neither bravado nor foolhardiness. The idea of a showdown with her lord and master was ludicrous; before the boys it was inconceivable. But she wanted to have her way and fought towards it with fierce determination. She wore gloves of the softest velvet lined with cast iron.

She used the tactics which Indian politicians were to begin to use a quarter of a century later in their struggle against British rule: confront the Englishman with the results of the education he had given them, embarrass him, shame him, make him squirm, beat him on the intellectual plane, and win – without creating resentment or malice. Speak deferentially, argue logically, stick to the point, don't let the adversary raise a different issue, pin him down, make him concede the justice of your demand even if he can't or won't concede the demand. Your moral victory will be complete. Aim at that and your work is done.

That is how Zuhra proceeded to tackle the problem and her husband. At his incredulous look she said in words as soft as cream, "Does the idea repel you? May I ask why?" He answered with the usual points about the honour of the family, the tradition of the society, the status of women of

honour, and with similar arguments of acknowledged pedigree and twice-worn sanctity. He added that no woman of the family had ever visited a bazaar. This had not been done in the past. It cannot be done today. He would not go into a shop by himself, here or elsewhere, not to speak of taking her along. He could not shame his ancestors. His father would turn in his grave if now the family took to such practices. He was not prepared to listen to this nonsense. Surely she was not serious. It must be a joke. She must be teasing him. Turning to his sons, he concluded, "Your mother has developed a sense of humour. Or, Lahore has gone to her head. Will you pass me the meat curry?"

The mother of his sons put her own mettle to the test. She pleaded her case with deft diplomacy, exposing the irrelevance of his arguments. Forestalling the profession of her grandson and great grandson (how genes work their wonders!), she unveiled the connection between the passing of time and the soul of a society. Time, she pointed out, was not a tide which receded from the shore. It overwhelms the coast and works a change. The change creates ripples which expand in unending circles. People don't stand still while the world is spinning like a top.

Calmly and confidently, often bringing a smile to her face to soften the tips of her mental barbs, she delivered a short lecture. I summarize here the report of her speech as I had it from my mother who had heard it from Ghulam Nabi in Kabul in 1907, nearly forty years after the event.

"I don't understand your annoyance at such a little wish of mine. Have I asked for the impossible? These shops have been opened to serve the people. If there are no customers to be served the merchants would put up their shutters. I know we do not visit the bazaar in Kahnuwan, the bazaar comes to us. Our honour remains intact; the necessary supplies reach us. But this is not Kahnuwan. Here if you assert your authority and make a show of insistence, one or two

shopkeepers may agree to bring their wares to our house. But others won't. There are so many shops, and such variety of things in each establishment. Don't you think it wise to explore as widely as possible before choosing what we need or want? If not, why so many shops selling the same articles? There must be much variety in Lahore, and I want to take things to Kahnuwan which will never be available there, not in your lifetime or mine. I shall be coming to Lahore often to visit the boys. I may even decide to spend a part of the year here. Do you expect me to live like a prisoner, cooped up in this 4-room house, breathing stale air, counting the hours till the boys return from their schools, counting the days till I return to Kahnuwan? Are you condemning me to such arid life? Does anyone gain anything from what you want done?

As for the honour of the family, we share its equity. You are a zamindar; I am the wife of a zamindar. If you have ancestral values to uphold, so have I. Two generations ago we were the same family. You did not marry beneath your class, you tied a knot within your own class and blood. My honour is as dear to me as yours to you. It is in fact the same honour and both of us are its defenders. So our honour is not on the agenda.

But, the Crown of my Head [*méré sartaj*], I don't understand one thing. Perhaps you will explain the mystery. This traditional dignity of our existence is not diminished or lowered by your sending one of our sons to serve the new farangi rulers, another son to study the language and books of these white masters, and the other two to modern schools. Our honour is not stained by your hobnobbing with white deputy commissioners and other officers of the new government. Our ancient values are not desecrated if our children add English and science to their knowledge of Arabic and Persian and our faith. Our standing in the eyes of the people of Kahnuwan remains untarnished even when we entertain foreigners, and when one by one all our sons

forsake the lands of their forefathers for new professions and new places. If our honour can laugh all these shifts and turns to scorn it should also be stout enough to tolerate my going to the Anarkali Bazaar.

For the last ten years, since you sent Ghulam Nabi to the Batala school, you have been trying to assuage my agony at parting from my son with talk of changing times and mounting tides. Year after year you have lectured me on the benefits of new education, the blessings of British rule, the advantages of marching with, not in the face of, the blowing wind, the imperatives of recognizing, acknowledging and exploiting the opportunities offered by a new dispensation, and the inherent worth of modernity. You have asked and ordered your family to walk the avenues freshly opened to us. We have done your bidding, and have gained something and lost something. We have suffered deprivations and long separations; this will continue for a few more years. We have educated our sons. We have cultivated the British. We have travelled far. We have trodden the new path to a new future at your command. But my walk of 200 yards to a shop in Anarkali does not fit into your chart of progress. Oh, the sire of my sons, will you explain the niceties of your logic to me and your growing sons? We sit here at your feet and await your word."

Waziruddin had no logic to expound and no word to pronounce. He stared at his wife as if seeing a new woman or a familiar woman with an unsuspected, new soul. He was taken aback by her outspokenness, astonished by her ability to marshal her arguments, but above all stunned by her courage. In his heart he must also have been pleased by her performance. He had seen and heard her in Kahnuwan, putting wives of prominent men in their place with a skill that concealed the sting of strong words and maintained relationships on an even keel. He had also seen her dealing with the servants and field labourers with irresistible authority

couched in soft phrases. He also knew that she could handle the boys with doting affection and strict discipline according to the occasion. He had had a few minor tiffs and differences of opinion with her which mark the conjugal life of every couple. But the long, leonine speech he had heard now showed him a different woman – one who could rebut logic with sounder logic, demand her right and stand by the demand, speak from the heart and speak well.

Had this happened a century later and the boys had not been present, he would have taken her into his arms and kissed her on the lips to celebrate a new discovery. Now he confined himself to slowly passing his left hand through his beard, producing a smile which began at the lips and travelled quickly to the eyes, and pushing his cap back from his forehead. He first stared at Zuhra, and the stare was more eloquent than any remaık he could have made; and it conveyed a medley of feelings: surprise, affection, pride, surrender. The woman knew she had won a complete victory. A flush of pure joy mounted her face and reddened her cheeks and forehead.

With the joy came a realization that the love and respect in which she held him were less than his deserts. The stare lasted a few seconds, but it transported the couple to their earliest days of companionship when the first foundation of mutual trust and affection had been laid. A new understanding was reached, a new bargain struck, a new compact sealed and delivered. Two years later the memory of this loving encounter would ease his pain of departing from this world in the knowledge that he was leaving the boys and the honour of the family in the safekeeping of a woman who could live like a man, tame the circumstances to her will, see the boys through their formative years until they were able to shape their lives by the standards and ideals of their own, manage the lands with efficiency and foresight, and move with the age. The stare did its work and charted the future of at least three generations.

Then Waziruddin shifted his gaze from the mother to her children. The well-behaved boys had sat through the scene with expressionless faces and palpitating hearts. Like the Wimbledon audience of later years, their eyes had been flitting from the mother's face to the father's, drinking in her words and judging his reaction. The 6-year old Ghulam Muhammad was too tender in understanding to measure the significance of the encounter, but even he was caught by surprise at the long speech of the mother. She had never, in his memory, spoken to his father at such length and so intensely. He was confused and a little scared. Ghulam Qadir listened attentively but he had a genius for concealing his reactions and impressions behind a placid façade. No one knew what he felt.

The 16 year-old Ghulam Nabi, older than his years and made worldly-wise by Sharfo's treatment of her husband and himself, had more than an inkling of the deep currents running underneath the debate. But he maintained a serious neutral look, conveying deliberately the impression that he had nothing to do with the husband-wife differences. In his heart he knew what it was all about. Being the favourite of both parents he was a little embarrassed, but on the merits of the case and because of his special ties with the mother silently voted for her, fearing that she might overstep the imperceptible but ineradicable line demarcating the authorities and duties of the man and wife of that age, and praying that his father would keep his temper and hear her out. At the end, he read aright the message in the father's look, and a slight movement on his lips presaged the *hint* of a smile. Before the hint could develop into an assertion, he saw his father transferring his attention from the mother to the boys. He knew the verdict was going to be pronounced, and though he had half anticipated the outcome he waited for it with bated breath.

It came accompanied by a low laugh and a twinkle in the eyes. Whatever the signal he had passed on to his wife

through that pregnant gaze, to his sons he was less subtle. Looking at them but pointing to his wife, he said in a half-serious half-mocking tone, "Have you ever seen her like this before? Is this your mother? I have discovered a new woman today. And tomorrow you and I will take this new discovery to the shops of Anarkali. We will see what Lahore sells and Kahnuwan buys." After a perceptible pause, he continued, "Ghulam Nabi, whenever your mother comes to visit you in future she will have the freedom of Anarkali and any other 'kali', but you must go with her, and if you are busy make sure a couple of servants are in attendance." Turning to his wife she said, "Are you happy now? I am glad I did not stand in your way. I am now going to say my prayers. You better draw up a list of things you are going to buy tomorrow. And listen. Don't order the shopkeepers around too much. This is not Kahnuwan, and they are not your subjects."

With these admonitory words he left the family in a happy huddle. Ghulam Muhammad chortled. Ghulam Qadir wore a slight smile. Ghulam Nabi laughed quietly and said, "Ammanji, you have done wonders today." Mother and sons began to discuss their first shopping expedition in Lahore: the mother with much care and thought, the sons with chuckles of delight as if shopping were a picnic or an adventure.

Next morning the family and the servants set out for the spree. Every member of the little caravan was duly impressed by the offerings in the shops. Waziruddin and the servants had some experience of purchasing household goods and cloth in Batala. The boys had never bought anything in Kahnuwan, but they had seen the shops and occasionally visited them with the servants.

It was the lady from Kahnuwan who saw a new world on offer. She was agog, but outwardly she took all this in her stride. She noticed one thing immediately. The shops of her town and those in Batala, which she had seen from the

passing tonga but never entered, consisted of warehouses or store-rooms fronted by overhanging planks of wood, the shopkeeper sitting with his legs folded beneath him and selling out things to people who stood outside the shop in the street. But here in Anarkali the larger establishments boasted a hall or a room of generous dimensions in which the wares were displayed or stocked on shelves running along the three walls, the fourth side forming the entrance. Five or six steps led up from the street level to the shop door. A glance around told her what was available, and she whispered to Waziruddin or one of the boys that she wanted to look closely at this or that article. The wish was relayed to the shopkeeper or one of his assistants who quickly transferred the named item from the shelf to a wide table (the precursor of the later-day counter) where it was examined and scrutinized by the family. The practice was followed at every shop they visited. No word passed between the lady and the staff of the shops.

On that day she bought much, some for the boys in Lahore, some for the Kahnuwan household, some for the servants back home, some for future use when the boys wedded and had their own homes, and some for no reason at all other than her excitement at the first shopping experience. She acquired bolts of cloth, linen, dresses, stationery, muslin for turbans, lengths for frock coats, caps, *kullahs*, utensils and other kitchenware, table covers, cushions, candles, lamps, canisters of oil and ghee, and a lot more. At every stop she made the selection, Waziruddin made the payment, the boys smiled at her extravagance and the father's acquiescence, the servants picked up the smaller shopping bundles, and the shopkeeper promised to deliver the bulky items to the house. In the evening when all the purchases were in, an inquest was held on the size, nature and cost of the acquisition. Everyone seemed to be happy at having had an interesting day. The mother promised herself many such trips whenever she was in Lahore in future.

Soon afterwards Waziruddin left for Kahnuwan with Ghulam Qadir, leaving Zuhra behind to see the boys properly settled. A month later he returned to find that the boys were adjusting well to new places and higher studies. He called on the headmaster of Ghulam Muhammad's school and the principal of the Medical School to reiterate his interest in the education of the boys and his hope that the teachers would spare neither the boys nor themselves in assuring their scholarly progress. Impressed by his zeal they promised to do their best.

At home he briefed Ghulam Nabi in detail on his new responsibilities and obligations. "You are no longer living in Batala", he reminded him, "where your elder brother could look after you. But then there is no Sharfo either, and that should make things easier. Now you are not only on your own but have the added duty of looking after Ghulam Qadir and Ghulam Muhammad. I know you love Ghulam Muhammad much. Go on doing that, but don't spoil him. Bring him up as I have brought you up, or rather as you have brought yourself up. Behave as if you were ten years older. As for you, I expect you to do even better at your School than you did at Batala. Work harder than any other student. Don't shame me before your teachers. I have surrendered your scholarship to the School. Now let your teachers know by your performance that you can be an excellent student without monetary enticements. Your mother will come and spend a few days with you every third or fourth month. I will see you next April after the in-gathering of the harvest. Write to me regularly. Ask me for anything you need within reason. You will not be denied. But never look at my land or property as an anchor. Riches come and go. They are the froth of life, not its contents. Talent and personal qualities make a man, and they are his permanent possessions. You must acquire and develop them. You stand at a bridge. You are crossing not a stream

or a river, but an age. Behind you stand I and Kahnuwan and the clean living of generations. Don't forget them. Before you lies a new world to conquer and make your own. Don't forget the past. It has made you what you are. But don't cling to it blindly. I have tried to serve as your crossroads. I have introduced you to a future which has many hazards along its way but also many gifts in its grasp. Face and defeat the hazards. Win the gifts. You will never be unhappy in this world. I will be proud in my grave.

I have only two things to tell you. Work hard, as hard as you can, to the limit of your capacity. Not just now or for the next few years. But all your life. Work is elixir. Indolence is poison. The Englishman has taught me this. I pass this on to you. God has laid two duties upon us: obligations to Him and obligations to His creatures. If you are remiss in the first He will forgive you, for He is above hurt. But if you infringe the second code, you will hurt mankind and displease your Maker. This even He, the great Forgiver, might find it hard to forgive. It is my belief that the way to God's pleasure lies only through the heart of man. Never break that heart, for that is where God dwells. Be kind to everyone. To be kind to your equals has no special merit. To be kind to your seniors or superiors is but another name for respect. Be kind to your inferiors, the weak and the poor, and the young and the sick. They need you. They deserve your attention. No, they have a right on your attention. Don't disappoint them. Earn their blessings. There is none whose prayer is more sincere or who will remember you with greater joy. Their prayer is an echo of God's pleasure. Receive the one and you will receive the other. Kindness to mankind is worship. Make it a habit. Then even if you miss a prayer God will forgive you. Your mother is a woman of exceptional character. Take her advice. Consult her. Obey her. All other decisions I leave to you."

This sounds very much like a last will and testament. And in fact it was to turn out to be that within four years. Ghulam

Nabi was so deeply moved by these words that he never forgot them. They were graven on the screen of his memory and on the tablets of his heart. He repeated them to himself several times during the following months, then to Ghulam Qadir and Ghulam Muhammad, and then to his own children as they grew up and had developed the sense to comprehend the message. As for himself, he made what he had heard the light by which he travelled the path of his life. A little before his death he recited, for the last time and almost word by word, the testament in the presence of all his children and other close relatives, then told them how hard he had tried to follow the advice, what contentment and inner satisfaction had been his reward, and with what tranquillity and peace of mind he now faced the "necessary end".

My father remembered the original words in their perfect order when for the first time he repeated them to me in 1942, with the reminder that to live by them was the hallowed tradition of the family and a badge of its membership. I am ashamed to confess that I have infringed the code several times.

Once the parents were gone to Kahnuwan the hard grind began for Ghulam Nabi, and it lasted till his final illness 56 years later. He worked even harder than he had in Batala. Medicine was not an easy subject to master, and his command of advanced English was still imperfect. But his exceptional memory came to his rescue, and fortunately it was both quick and retentive. He did not have to learn by rote the Latin words, complicated formulae, long medical terms and the names of drugs. The time thus saved was put to three uses: improving his English, reading widely in his field, and coaching Ghulam Muhammad. At this time he developed the habit of rising very early to be able to put in a few extra hours of work before going to the School. After some time, on the suggestion of one of the servants who was a pious man of advanced years, he began to say the

post-midnight prayers (*tahajjud*) before starting on his books. This long spiritual exercise made him remember God and also blessed his work. The habit became such an ineradicable routine of his life that he insisted on following it even when he was partially stricken by paralysis towards his closing years. It was only during the last few months of his life that he found it impossible to perform this duty. He made amends for this by arranging the Quran to be read aloud to him for several hours every day by a member of the family.

That year Ghulam Nabi did not go to Kahnuwan during the Christmas break. He spent these days in reading in the School library and making some difficult experiments in the laboratory. Ghulam Muhammad returned in January 1869 and the old routine was resumed. Work and work alone remained Ghulam Nabi's entire world. Just before exhaustion overwhelmed him he would bring to mind what his father had told him. The remembrance was sometimes a whip and sometimes an inspiration. But it served its purpose. Energy flowed back into his body. Boredom or sleep vanished. The mind became alert. The grey matter began to function again. He bent upon his books. There was no escape from labour. All life was labour. Why not pass it with a smile and laugh at the load! And also set an example to Ghulam Muhammad, whose interest in studies was still lukewarm, intermittent and unpredictable.

In the spring of 1869 Ghulam Nabi stood first in the preliminary year examination. He was pleased, not only with the success but with the proof that hard work did produce results. But the scourge of responsibility lost some of its severity by the approval of the father and the exuberance of the mother. Zuhra had come to Lahore to see him through the examination and was enthralled by the result. She spent the spring in Lahore, encouraging her sons, asking the servants to look after them with even greater attention, seeing a bit of the

city, and of course shopping in Anarkali. Waziruddin came in May to see his sons and congratulate Ghulam Nabi.

In early July Ghulam Muhammad went home and Ghulam Nabi stayed back to put in an undisturbed spell of work. He was in Kahnuwan in September for a month. By now the parents had decided to send Ghulam Qadir to Lahore to continue his education. The Lahore home was richer by one inmate. The Kahnuwan household was reduced to an elderly couple who made the best of its loneliness by talking of the happy future of the boys, entertaining visiting relatives, making short trips to Mukerian, Kaithan and Dasuha, and coming occasionally to Lahore.

In 1870 Ghulam Nabi took a first in his second year examination but missed the top place by a small margin. The disappointment was slight and he did not let it weigh on his mind.

NUR ENTERS THE FAMILY

In the spring he was summoned to Kahnuwan by Waziruddin. The letter calling him home only said that some important consultations were due. On his arrival he discovered that the greatest crisis of his life faced him. His parents informed him that they had decided to marry him to Nurunnisa, the younger sister of Sharfo, and the wedding would take place in the coming summer when he would be home for the long vacation. He was stunned. There were two sources of his worry.

The first was his studies. His father's special interest in his education, his own effort and devotion and the long course of medical instruction had obliged him to concentrate his attention on his studies to the exclusion of any other consideration or thought. In the short term, and that is what mattered for the time being, his strength and mind were reserved for the attainment of only one ideal: graduating in medicine. He was now in the third year of his course and the most difficult and arduous part of the

training lay ahead. Marriage at this stage would be a demanding distraction, a heavier than usual responsibility, and an almost intolerable call upon his time. Children were married off early in those days; the girls at the age of 13 to 15 and the boys at that of 16 to 18. He was now over 18 and unable to plead his years as an argument for postponing the marriage. When he enlisted his education as an ally, Waziruddin countered by saying that his bride would be a comfort to him in his Lahore life, a supervisor of the all-male household, a co-sharer in the burdensome task of running a home, a partner enriching and softening his hard life and thus helping him in his studies. The arguments did not convince him, but he was not given to debate with his father.

The choice of the bride-to-be came as a bomb-shell to him. Of all the girls in the family or from the outside Sharfo's sister was the last person he could imagine as his wife. Didn't he know Sharfo too well? Had he not suffered so much at her hands in Batala for three searing years? Had she not proved herself to be an unbearable wife for Azizuddin? True, real sisters could be different in temperament and character. Conceivably Nur was not as bad as Sharfo. It was even possible that she was a likeable girl and would prove a good wife. But could he stake his entire life on possibilities, probabilities and hopes? Marriage was always a matter of chance, more so when the couple had not known each other. But to marry Sharfo's sister was a reckless gamble with the near-certainty that the dice were loaded against him.

He told all this to his father in respectful but moving words, emphasizing the unhappiness of his eldest son (Azizuddin) to make the point and stressing his own status as a student to appeal to Waziruddin's keen interest in his education. The reply was that she would in fact help him concentrate on his studies by taking over some of his household obligations. He reminded the pater that he had already two younger brothers to look after. The addition of a

wife to his dependants would be too heavy a burden. The old man answered back that the shouldering of responsibilities at a young age was the best training for later life. When the son looked helplessly at his father, Waziruddin closed the conversation by saying that if Ghulam Nabi was sure that his Lahore life would be disrupted by his wife he could leave her in Kahnuwan, visit her during the School breaks, and take her home when he had a job. The son kept quiet. The father read the silence as acquiescence.

Ghulam Nabi then took his case to the supreme tribunal in whose justice he believed as strongly as in God: the court of motherly love. He could speak frankly to the mother; also more optimistically, knowing that if the need was dire and she was convinced of the rightness of a cause, she had the courage and the determination to stand up to Waziruddin. One morning when the father was out inspecting the lands he sought out his mother and engaged her in a long discussion. He bared his soul to her. Mingling passion with logic he pressed his case with eloquent vigour. Words tumbled out of his lips as if released by a hidden coiled spring. He put his heart in his speech. For once his feelings tore through the barrier of his usual reticence. He who was wont to convey long thoughts in a few words now spoke with fervour of his fears and apprehensions, his hopes and ideals, his plans and responsibilities, and above all of his terror of spending his life with Sharfo's sister.

The mother let him have his say without interruption. Her occasional remarks were confined to a few soft-spoken interjections uttered in encouraging tones: "Yes", "Go on", "And then", "Say it again", "So you think so", "Is that so?", "I understand", "Finish what you are saying", "That I know", and so on. Ghulam Nabi spoke for a good part of an hour. Then Zuhra asked a few questions and got the replies. After that she pulled Ghulam Nabi closer to her (they were sitting on a bed), put her arm around his shoulder in a half

embrace, then pushed him away and turned sideways to face him and began to speak.

Two years ago in Lahore he had seen his mother taking on her formidable husband on the comparatively minor issue of shopping in Anarkali. He had witnessed her fearlessness and sensed her suppressed anger. That had been a revelation to him. Today she showed him a different side of herself. He was vouchsafed another revelation.

"My son", she said, "now you listen to me carefully, as I have listened to you. Two fears are haunting you: distraction in your studies and living with Sharfo's shadow. I am sure you can cope with the first. Being a student and living a married life are not incompatible. Your habit of hard work will compensate for the time you will earmark for your wife. She appreciates your devotion to your studies, and as a good wife she will be a help rather than a hindrance".

"A good wife?", interjected Ghulam Nabi. "Don't interrupt me", ordered the mother. "I know what is eating you up. I will come to it later. Don't forget that a wife is a partner in all that her husband does. Your bride will share your worries and preoccupations. She has had only modest education. But you will see how her presence will improve your capacity to attend to your books. You will feel that you are not alone, and that, darling, is a great thing and shapes one's life in unexpected and happy ways. Believe it. I speak from long experience. Take just one example. She will take over the greater part of your responsibility for looking after your younger brothers and also assume complete control of the servants and the running of the house. I can imagine by how much that will lighten your load. Her presence will create conditions in which you will feel relaxed. You are always tense because so much has been laid upon you at such a young age. She will take the stress out of your system. You will find life more congenial and the circumstances more conducive to work."

"Now I come to your greater fear. I know Sharfo better than you do. I also know the full extent and precise details of your suffering at her hands in Batala. The servants reported to me every little thing. I have known Nur all her life. I chose her for you two years ago, and since then I have been studying her as closely as you read your books. Last year I called her here and she lived with me for several months. I tell you with all the certainty I can command that she is the exact opposite of Sharfo. They neither look nor act as sisters. They are utterly different. Nur is gentle, affectionate, sympathetic and understanding. She is only 16 but has sound common sense. She is a peaceful person with an even temper. I have never heard her utter a sharp or loud word. She is a sweet girl. She loves life and enjoys it, unlike Sharfo. She likes people. Her mind is well tuned. Her heart is soft. Her outlook is healthy. There is no bitterness in her. She suffers from no complexes. She is a simple, straightforward, uncomplicated girl of our blood and class. Sharfo is a freak, not a norm. Nur is like us. I am not giving her a certificate to recommend her to you. I am describing her to you. What I know tells me that she will be a good wife to you. What I feel tells me that you will love her."

"Remember, my son, a mother never lies to her children, however great the temptation. I love you above others though you are not the youngest. You have always been my darling. I could easily kill myself to ensure your happiness. I have suffered the pangs of separation so that you received good education. I cried for you when you left us. I wept for hours, and like a child, when I was informed of Sharfo's treatment of you. My joy knew no bounds when you left Batala. Even now, when you are in Lahore and doing well, I miss you as if you were my only child. My love, how could I ever think of marrying you to Nur unless I knew full well that she is a suitable girl? You marry her without any fear or misgiving or doubt. She will make your life a thing of pleasure, and I will have the joy of witnessing your happiness. One day you will

bless me for choosing her for you. I want that day to arrive soon. My darling, no mother wishes her child ill. The very reason of her being is to make her children happy. I am a mother. That is the reason of my being. You are my son, the apple of my eye, the coolness of my heart, the elixir of my soul, the centre of my existence. You are my heartbeat. Trust me. Accept Nur as your bride, as your life. You will never regret it. May God grant me long years to see you two live like two bodies in one soul. That is my only longing, only prayer."

Ghulam Nabi felt his heart melting when these words were spoken. He did not say anything. There was nothing to say. He turned towards her mother, held her in a long, tight embrace, and then threw herself in her lap. He was once again a child, taking shelter under her mother's wings, depending on her, trusting her, believing in her. The mother hugged her, bent down and kissed his forehead, his eyes and his cheeks, and her tears fell upon his face. The tears were hot, as nature has decreed, but to him they felt as cool as the touch of ice on scorching days, as the shade of a tree in a blistering summer noon. Tears welled up in his own eyes, and mother and child felt like one. His faith in her took a new life, like the sun breaking triumphantly through clouds after a stormy shower of rain. All his doubts and fears fled before his mother's assurances. They dissolved like salt in water.

Ghulam Nabi and Nur were engaged in early April. The wedding was fixed for September. A week later Ghulam Nabi returned to Lahore with a heart brimful with strange and teasing thoughts. Life was changing. Ghulam Qadir had come with him. There were now three brothers living in the house, attended by three servants. There was more talk, more life, in the house, more hopes and plans in Ghulam Nabi's heart. He worked harder than before, putting in extra laboratory hours in the evening, spending more time with his books, knowing that after September he would have to rearrange his timetable to make room for his bride.

In May Zuhra came to Lahore for one full month to make the necessary purchases for the wedding, specially cloth for Nur's dresses, jewellery, linen, and a few more things for her own home. When Ghulam Nabi asked her not to spend too much she did not listen to him. She said she had to get things to fit Nur's new status: wife of an educated city boy. She realized that doctors did not live in villages or small towns but in cities and their wives moved in urban and socially superior circles. She brought cloth that was rarely seen in Kahnuwan or Kaithan. She ordered the goldsmiths of Anarkali to fashion ornaments in the latest designs. She even went to a fashionable Anarkali tailor for the dresses, which made Ghulam Nabi laugh and remark, "Ammanji, you are planning as if I will be taking her to Vilayet [England]". To which she replied, "Who knows? If not to Vilayet, certainly to other places where she would need to dress well, to turn herself out to fit the company or the occasion. My daughter-in-law is going to be a doctor's wife and live in high society. You know nothing about women or their clothes. Keep quiet and let me buy what catches my fancy." In the exuberance of her innocent, half-playful, half-serious loving concern for Nur, Zuhra was being cannily prophetic. In her time Nur was destined to live in strange far-away places, attend courts and move in royal company. Thus, thanks to Zuhra's love for her son and her passion for shopping, Nur came to be the first woman in my family to dress according to the fashions of Lahore and deck herself out in jewellery designed in the capital.

When the School closed at the end of June Ghulam Nabi sent his brothers to Kahnuwan but himself stayed back for a 2-month stint of hard work in the library and the dissection room. As in the whole of his later life, he was even now planning ahead by putting in extra work in anticipation of later preoccupations. Since his school days he was accustomed to place a high value on time. How could he fail to make the best of the few bachelor days left to him?

In the meantime in Kahnuwan Waziruddin and Zuhra were preparing for the wedding. The big haveli and the smaller ones around it were renovated and cleaned, the furniture was polished, more beds and cots were ordered, bedrooms were fitted up with linen brought from Lahore, streets close to the residence were paved or re-paved with bricks, transport was arranged, invitations were sent to near and remote relatives, and the servants were issued new liveries. The town hummed with activity, preparing itself for a great splash. When Ghulam Nabi arrived in September he was agog at what he saw, and felt happy and proud.

The wedding came off with all the pomp and show that Waziruddin could manage. A few hundred persons who had been fed richly and accommodated in great comfort for 2-4 weeks, travelled in state to Kaithan as the wedding party, and were entertained lavishly by Nur's parents for three days and two nights. The party returned with the bride, the town was lighted up to receive it, and there was merriment and joy all around. On the following day a large party arrived from Kaithan for the *walima*, the post-wedding feast hosted by the father of the bridegroom. It seemed as if the whole population of Kahnuwan had been invited. Food was sent to the houses of the very old, the sick and others who could not attend. The town wore a festive look. Night had been turned into day with hundreds of gas lamps. The eves, breastsummers, and edges of the roofs of the havelis were decorated with thousands of lighted *divas*. The food was rich and ample, the ambience luxurious, the people full of cordiality, the servants willing and active. That dinner was remembered in the town for many years. It was also the last feast given by Waziruddin and the last family marriage to be celebrated in Kahnuwan. Though few then knew, it was my family's farewell party to the place where it had lived for 300 years or more.

The Kaithan guests stayed for one night in Kahnuwan, some of them spending another night there, the relatives

invited by Waziruddin lingered for another week. By stages the reunion tapered off. By the end of September only Waziruddin and Zuhra were left in the haveli with there three sons and the new daughter-in-law. Life returned to normal, but not for Ghulam Nabi. He was delighted with his bride, but as custom demanded could not express his happiness in front of or share it with his parents or even his brothers. And yet everyone noticed the glow of joy on his face and a new light in his eyes, and was happy with him. The happiest person in the town, happier than even the newly-weds, was Zuhra. Her long conversation with Ghulam Nabi in April had lived in her memory like a burning coal. Since then a sliver of doubt had clouded her mind. Will Ghulam Nabi accept Nur from his heart? Will the girl vindicate the mother's choice? Zuhra had been a prey to many a misgiving. Now at last her heart was at rest. Everything had turned out for the best. She felt a surge of satisfaction invading her spirit. She flowed with it and experienced a calm which was as serene as it was joyful. Waziruddin's gladness was of a different kind. He was satisfied on a duty well performed. As the host and the head of the family he was happy and content at a well-staged wedding. Everything had gone swimmingly well. He had spent much, but he could afford it. Everyone had enjoyed his hospitality. Everyone had congratulated him on the scale and generosity of the occasion. Ghulam Nabi seemed to be pleased. Nur looked good to see and was perfectly behaved. Zuhra was relieved, though a little tired.

With the end of the month (September 1870) Ghulam Nabi and Nur came to Lahore with Ghulam Qadir and Ghulam Muhammad. Other additions to the household were a middle-aged woman servant to tend to Nur's needs and her daughter of Nur's age to give the bride her company.

Gradually Ghulam Nabi and his 16-year old wife settled to Lahore life. The next 6 months were spent in grappling with

the complexities of marital life, reading each other's mind, observing each other's habits, and reaching an understanding.

Ghulam Nabi was mentally old in years, reticent, serious, reserved, used to living with responsibilities, devoted to his studies, and engaged in making a new career for himself. The two brothers in the house respected him and at times feared him, but dared not be intimate. His daily life moved in the well-cut grooves of a Spartan timetable. He was deeply religious, practising his faith with sincerity and fervour, not in hollow ritual, and without the slightest trace of fanaticism. Twelve years of absence from Kahnuwan, the period spent at Sharfo's sufferance, long company of the teachers of the ALOE School and the Medical School who were outsiders, the socially alienating pull of his studies, and the necessity of dealing with servants rather than relatives – all this had cast him in a peculiar mould and made him an unusual if not a difficult man to live with.

He took life too seriously at an age when boys seek enjoyment, behave at times with abandon, gossip with bosom friends, hold converse with strangers, and look for innocent pleasures. Ghulam Nabi's only company had been with older people like his teachers, parents and servants. He loved Zuhra, the strong-willed and stout-hearted mother. He had great esteem for his father. He appreciated what his teachers had done for him. He had exceptional affection for Ghulam Muhammad. But all these were unequal relationships. There was a crippling gap in his emotional life. He had had no dealings with an equal. He had never laughed. He had never loved.

Nur taught him how to laugh, though to begin with only in private and with her. She was young in years, but in tropical climates girls mature early and may be married off at the age of 12 or 13 and become mothers a year later. So being only 16 was no handicap. She had some positive advantages over her husband. She had lived a normal existence of her class: living

in comfort amidst a horde of cousins and maidservants, playing games, singing folk songs, visiting neighbours, quarrelling and making peace, learning much from close proximity to her parents who, after producing an oddity in the shape of Sharfo, had given extra attention to Nur's upbringing. She was taught how to read and write elementary Persian and Urdu. She could recite in cadence snatches of Punjabi poetry, echo the voices of birds, play a practical joke and be sober the next moment. She was a healthy, perfectly normal girl taking the world in her stride. Once affianced to Ghulam Nabi, her parents had taken pains to prepare her to handle a husband of Ghulam Nabi's individuality, character and background.

Luckily Ghulam Nabi and Nur had no child for three years, a rare occurrence in those times. Nur used the interregnum between marriage and motherhood to study, understand and change Ghulam Nabi. She did not find the task difficult at all. As happens so often in the case of young men reared in loneliness and out-of-ordinary circumstances, Ghulam Nabi, had, so to speak, been waiting for an administering angel to bring him down to the earth of mortal beings with normal desires and feelings. Nur was intelligent and well briefed, and was living outside the joint family system. Zuhra came to Lahore but only occasionally. Ghulam Qadir was roughly her equal in age, but he kept himself to himself, spending most of his time in studies and on his infatuation with classical Persian poetry which he read and recited at all odd hours. Anyway he was a pilgrim soul and returned to Kahnuwan in the following year. Ghulam Muhammad was only eight, and like a child to Nur and Ghulam Nabi.

Nur fitted superbly into this simple and uncomplicated web of relationships. She was of medium stature, slim of frame, fair of complexion, quick of movement, swift of smile. In heart and mind she was ready to give her affection to all who deserved it or were in need of it, loving in her blood

relationships, fond of children (to the delight of Ghulam Muhammad), and a good judge of human beings. She was equally generous with her money. To the servants she turned a Janus face of stern discipline and deep sympathy. She had great respect for her father-in-law and mother-in-law, and showed it to their utter satisfaction. She came to love Ghulam Muhammad both for his own sake and for his special links with Ghulam Nabi. She commanded the servants with a confidence born of her background, willing instant obedience. But when they fell sick or had some serious problem, she was an angel of mercy looking after them as if they were her equals. The servants of those days were a part of the family more than are the members of the family today.

Her emotional and sentimental investment bore rich fruit. Within six months she was the favourite daughter-in-law, sister-in-law, blood relative, and mistress. Her mild temperament, sympathetic instinct, readiness to make friends, anxiety to be kind and helpful, delicate courtesy, and the habit of giving everyone his due, endeared her to all. The parents-in-law were delighted; in fact, overjoyed by the thought that their choice was vindicated, and Ghulam Nabi's initial misgivings and fears were given an effective quietus. Zuhra loved her till the day of her death. Waziruddin called her the light of his eyes. Ghulam Qadir was glad that at last somebody in the house not only listened to his rhythmical recitation of Persian poetry with interest and pleasure but capped some of the verses with what she could recall of her own study in the field. Ghulam Muhammad, separated from her mother, discovered in Nur an ever-flowing fount of maternal love and, bridging the narrow gap between their ages, became for all practical purposes her first son. The family retainers were devoted to her in all her roles: as the wife of Ghulam Nabi (whom they had served since his earliest Batala days), as the favourite daughter-in-law of Waziruddin, as the mistress of the house, and as a person

who wept with them when they heard of a death in their family and laughed with them when they were happy. The household ran like a well-ordered life, where discipline kept the balance, mutual sympathy smoothed out sharp corners, and the shared affection was a constant reminder of the one quality or status that everyone shared: humanity with all its virtues and foibles.

Nur's greatest triumph was over Ghulam Nabi. She did not make a new man of him. Transformation is beyond the human reach. She changed him as far as she could, and that was quite far. She made him take an interest in things other than books and think about life in a broader perspective. He made friends and entertained them. He learned to talk about general things of the world. Though of little education herself, she persuaded him to read beyond his medical textbooks, and to value the beauty of Persian and Punjabi poetry. As days passed she made it a habit to recite to him long passages from Punjabi verse classics and in turn to ask him to read to him Persian ghazals or Sa'di's short stories. The seed was well sown. The effort resulted ultimately in making Ghulam Nabi a poet in Persian of more than a modest talent. Above all, she succeeded in breaching the ramparts of reserve and self-sufficiency which he had built around himself in the last 10 years. His character, outlook and habits altered under her gentle, persuasive, constant but unobtrusive guidance.

This was not done in six months or one or two years. Nor was it done to the uttermost limits. But over the years Ghulam Nabi became a man of the world, at least as much as his nature allowed. He could now bend without breaking, laugh without guffawing, behave intimately without the dread of losing his dignity, show his emotions instead of merely experiencing them inside himself, talk freely though not animatedly, enforce discipline without being harsh. But the basic contours of the mould retained their original ambit

and configuration. His reticence did not disappear. Nor his predilection for following, and making others follow, a strict code of conduct. Nor his obsession with hard work and long labour. But, thanks to Nur, his abnormal attachment to one or two goals in his life was expanded to include a variety of other ideals and interests. He emerged from under her tutelage as a normal human being.

As the handiwork of a young, half-educated wife still in her teens and living in the nineteenth century in the shadow of a strong-willed husband of entrenched habits and rules of living this was a remarkable achievement. Through her inborn intelligence, untiring efforts, unflagging resolve and deep interest in her husband, Nur laid down firmly the lineaments of the next two generations. Much more than other mothers, she predetermined the character and mien of her children and grandchildren. If Waziruddin initiated the tendency of modernity in the family and Ghulam Nabi was his principal successor who pulled on the oars faster and with greater vigour, it was Nur's spirit which hovered above the course of the transformation. It is the mother who rears the children and ensures as much the permanence of change as the continuity of tradition. The female is the element of stability and balance, the male of adventure and hazard. Nur gave her best to the family and stamped her yet-to-be-born descendants with her personality.

Ghulam Nabi's studies progressed well. The loss of the hours which he had to spend on his conjugal and social life was compensated by greater concentration. In 1871 he passed his third professional examination with high marks and won two silver medals. Everybody was happy. It was Nur's first vicarious pleasure at the success of another person. She savoured its novelty, felt proud, and prayed even harder for her husband's final success. In the spring-summer of 1872 Ghulam Nabi sailed through the penultimate hurdle with flying colours, winning another

medal and a number of commendations. The rewards of his labour were coming through, and his joy was the greater because now it was shared by Nur. The news of his scholastic performance warmed the cockles of his parents' heart.

THE PASSING AWAY OF A RENAISSANCE MAN

The academic year of 1872-73 was the final lap in Ghulam Nabi's race as a student. He decided to stay back in Lahore and put in three months of sustained work during the 1872 summer vacation to ease the pressure of the final year. To be alone with his books he sent Nur with his brothers to Kahnuwan, and settled down to a timetable of voracious reading supplemented by experiments in the laboratory. The first two weeks of July passed without any interruption. In the third week tragedy struck. He received a message from Kahnuwan that his father was seriously ill. He put his books aside and hastened home.

In Kahnuwan he discovered that Waziruddin's condition was worse than he had feared. He had high fever which had come suddenly, and there were no facilities in the town for a proper diagnosis. The patient was too weak and the means of transport too rough to contemplate a transfer to Lahore. The British civil surgeon of Gurdaspur was called in, but he held out little hope. The fever was invading the brain and Waziruddin was slowly sinking into a comatose condition. Couriers were dispatched to the family settlements beyond the river and to Batala and Amritsar. Most of the relatives arrived post haste and were shocked to see Waziruddin so near his death. They prayed with tears in their eyes. Zuhra was prostrate with anxiety. The sons prepared themselves for the shock of parting from their father. Nur, whom Waziruddin had loved much and dearly, stayed at his bedside until exhaustion overtook her. A few days passed, and the agony of the family became beyond bearing.

The end came in the early hours of 3 August 1872. A few minutes after the early morning prayer call, made from the family mosque which Waziruddin had renovated and extended a few years earlier, he breathed his last. He died in a state of coma, without an opportunity to talk to his wife and sons. He was buried before noon in the family graveyard adjacent to the mosque, next to his father and forefathers who had been dying the last 300 years and becoming the soil of Kahnuwan. In life he had lived vividly. In death he passed quietly into eternal silence and the company of his elders. Dust unto dust!

Waziruddin had been a link between many opposites. In his influence on the social and intellectual growth of the family, he bridged the traditional and the modern ways of life. In terms of time, and reckoning his age as stretching into the later years of its impact, he connected the eighteenth century, not with the nineteenth but the twentieth. He was born in the closing year of the eighteenth century, lived in the nineteenth, prepared his children for the twentieth, and his great grandchildren for the twenty-first. He was a man of the new age in realizing the worth of education, listening to the call of change, stirring out of Kahnuwan to see things for himself, bringing up his sons in the light of the new day that had dawned in 1849 with the Punjab passing under British rule, appreciating that progress now lay in government employment and new professions, and combining old values and ways of life with the new ones. He had noticed the signs of the era and read in them what was worthy of reading.

He had been born in an ancient farming family of a small town (no bigger than a large village), but before saying farewell to it he had sent his first born into the civil service, dispatched the other three sons to Lahore for their education, visited and lived in Lahore, seen his wife shopping in Anarkali, and heard of his daughter-in-law doing the same. He had led a full life and equipped his family for leading

even a fuller one. He had lived with the past, supped on the present, and welcomed the heralds of the future. With one foot as firmly planted in the old as the other in the new, the giant step of his life spanned two histories (Sikh and British), two ways of life (ancient and modern), two outlooks (traditional and novel), two geographies (Kahnuwan and Lahore), two economies (farming and European medicine), and two worlds (the East and the West).

He was the Renaissance man of my family, its wind of change, its agent of modernity, its messenger of new tidings, its harbinger of a revolution. In his person and mind he summed up all the ingredients of transition: turmoil and hope, pain and exhilaration, deprivation and reward, loss and gain, distress and triumph, tension and calm.

3

GRANDFATHER

GHULAM NABI: 1852-1926

THE MAKING OF A DOCTOR

As personal feelings and social custom dictated, the family mourned Waziruddin for forty days. Then in mid-September began long conclaves to work out the future. Many things clamoured for attention and prompt decision.

Azizuddin was serving in Batala, and her wife, Sharfo, was unfit to be the heir-apparent of Zuhra. The other sons were studying in Lahore. Ghulam Nabi had all the makings of a leader, but he was still a student. Even after finishing his medical course he was not expected to return to Kahnuwan and act as Waziruddin II. The collateral elders were too busy across the Beas to look after the estate. Shamsuddin was in poor health and could not leave Mukerian. Azizuddin had been distancing himself from the family since his marriage to Sharfo. Perhaps he had not forgiven his parents for choosing her as his wife. For years now he had lived in Batala, for the first ten years in uneasy loneliness and the next six in a state of troubled domestic life. He rarely visited the lands and had scant interest in the plans about their future. The other elders could

only give counsel and make suggestions. All the vital decisions were left to Zuhra and her three younger sons; in effect, to Zuhra alone.

At this time of crisis and crucial decision making Zuhra showed her true mettle and proved to be the saviour of the family. Combining her own iron will with what she had learnt from her husband, she surveyed the situation and identified the three factors which should determine the steps to be taken: Waziruddin's wishes, the future of the sons, and the management of the estate. After lengthy discussions with Ghulam Nabi, in which Nur was present and was occasionally asked for her opinion, Zuhra gave her verdict in favour of a status quo. She herself will live in Kahnuwan and supervise and manage the property. The boys will continue their studies in Lahore. Once Ghulam Nabi had taken his degree and entered independent life the state of things would be reconsidered and necessary action taken.

Ghulam Nabi and his brothers returned to Lahore in the first week of October (1872), leaving Nur with Zuhra to give her company. In Kahnuwan Zuhra showed remarkable resilience in recovering from her bereavement, a process much helped by her keen interest in the affairs of the lands. To her own surprise and the astonishment of her managers and leaseholders, she demonstrated unsuspected skills in the art of husbandry. Crops were sown and harvested as before. The leaseholders paid their dues on time. The cultivators and farm labourers worked as before and were treated well. She dealt with the revenue officials of the lower grades face to face, or from behind a screen, which unnerved them and put her at an advantage. Nur sat behind the screen or the half-open door and learnt her first lessons in financial management, discussions with strangers and economic control. Soon she was allowed to intervene and argue with land managers and government officials. In later life this training enabled her to run a larger-than-usual household and act and decide independently when

Ghulam Nabi was away. At regular intervals she went to Lahore for a week or two to be with her husband. The affairs of Kahnuwan ran smoothly. Zuhra was the queen regnant; Waziruddin's absence was still a stab in the heart, but it was not allowed to affect the family's material fortunes.

In Lahore the three brothers resumed their life of study and hard work, but under a shadow of grief and loss which refused to melt away. There was less laughter, no light gossip, and few poetical recitals. Ghulam Nabi became even more serious about his studies. The painful awareness that he was now the head of the family in the making made him work harder and put greater pressure on Ghulam Muhammad to attend to his schooling with all the assiduity he could muster. Ghulam Nabi also wanted to absorb himself in work to drive grief into oblivion. Nur was mostly in Kahnuwan. He missed her. He missed her mother. He missed his father more than anybody else. It took him several weeks to emerge from the valley of sorrow.

The next six months were the hardest in his life. He set upon his books with demonic energy. Preparing for his finals and cheering up his brothers were his only mission. Nothing else mattered. He went to Kahnuwan for an odd weekend or two. His teachers knew his state of mind, his ambitions, and his capacity to take on the hardships of life with unusual courage. They gave him every help, from genuine sympathy to extra supervision. In April 1873 he sat his examination with mixed emotions. He was confident of success because he had put into the effort all he had. Yet the immensity of what was at stake scared him. He wrote his scripts with a quivering heart, a brave face and a racing brain. As soon as he was free he went to Kahnuwan to relax, share Zuhra's duties, and be with Nur. The two women prayed for his success with fervour and hope.

Two months later the result was announced and Ghulam Nabi could walk in the sun. He did not top the list as he had

once hoped, but was placed second (after Thakur Das), got a first, a gold medal and a number of honourable mentions. At the convocation which followed later he was shaken by the hand by the Lieutenant Governor, R. H. Davies, patted on the back by the Principal, Dr. T. E. Brown, and congratulated by his teachers. It was the ninth batch to pass out of the School, and the largest in number. Nine boys graduated that year, compared to 2 in 1872, 6 in 1871, 1 in 1870, 5 in 1869, 4 in 1867, 5 in 1866, and 1 in 1865. He was the 32nd. graduate, and the 4th. among the Muslims: the other three being Muhammad Ali and Muhammad Husain Khan, both of the 1866 batch, and Wazir Ali Khan of the 1871 class.

What pleased Ghulam Nabi very much was that the boy who stood first, Thakur Das, was the same hopeful who had in 1868 missed his scholarship by one place and had received the grant surrendered by Waziruddin to the perplexity of the then principal, Dr. J. B. Scriven. How much he wished that his father had lived long enough to see his son become a doctor with distinction and also to find that his generosity had been aptly given to Thakur Das. How greatly would this have pleased him. But God's will is greater than any mortal's wish, and that is how it should be.

The news made history in Kahnuwan. The people of the town behaved as if it was they who had won a medal. The bazaars and streets were lit up to celebrate the success of Waziruddin's son, and so were the family havelis and the mosque. The neighbours and cultivators mourned the dead chief once more. When Ghulam Nabi arrived he was received like a returning hero. On alighting from the post coach he was welcomed by a large crowd which had brought with it the finest horse from the Waziruddin stable. He was asked to seat himself on the richly caparisoned horse, and was then taken through the main streets in a lively and vociferous procession up to the main gate of the principal haveli. For the shy new graduate it was an

unnerving experience. It was only his loyalty to the town and his anxiety to share the popular emotion which made him keep his composure and smile to the people.

The two happiest persons in the town were two women. Zuhra forgot for a time the loss of her husband in her joy at her son's triumph. The love of a mother has no limits, but today she wanted to take Ghulam Nabi into her lap, which she did, and never let him go, which she could not. She welcomed him with the joy of a mother and the craving of a widow. She kissed and hugged him on her own behalf and on her deceased husband's. The son read her mind and kissed her in return and shed tears in which joy and sorrow mingled unrecognizably.

Nur's heart overflowed with a jumble of tender emotions which she could not untangle, though she wanted to separate each from each and examine its nature and content. She was too young for the exercise, but old enough to feel jubilant and proud. When the pulse of a wife beats in unison with her husband's and both sense the parallel and coterminous movements, they share every sentiment. Nur had mourned Waziruddin's death with the intensity of a real daughter. Now she rejoiced with Ghulam Nabi on his first significant success in life.

While Zuhra and the people of the town were happy at producing their first graduate, Nur's joy was more deeply seated and had many dimensions. First she was engaged to an undergraduate of Lahore, and wondered what all this was about. Then she married him and came to live in a large city which was a different world. Here she encouraged her newly-acquired husband to take to a different way of life, to open up in conversation, to smile and laugh, to participate in others' existence, and to live in contentment in this very imperfect world. Here, too, she supervised his timetable of daily work so that her presence and his married state did not interfere with his studies. Later she had cried with him at the

loss of his father. Now her soul leapt with joy at his triumph and she let him know of the fact. It was during these very early years that the two cousins developed a perfect understanding, sharing not only the bliss of married life but also the far rarer all-encompassing and all-pervading oneness of outlook and an undefined but deeply felt empathy. This meeting of minds which lasted for 45 years ended with Nur's death in July 1915. When the news of her passing away reached Ghulam Nabi in Kabul, he wrote to his elder son (my father) that he was in deep anguish, had lost all interest in this world and at moments contemplated suicide. So strong was the bond forged by Nur and so great the devotion she had commanded.

Ghulam Nabi must have experienced an overwhelming pleasure at his success. It was the first fruit of his labour and the first fulfilment of his own desires and his parents' prayers. But his natural seriousness of mind and habit of reticence stood in the way of making a holiday of it. He did not wear his heart on his sleeve. Like the Victorian Englishman, he let his lips carry a slight stir of movement when others smiled, he smiled when others laughed; he never laughed except in the most intimate circles. This self-control at so young an age was a product of long years spent in pursuing an ideal, outstaring Sharfo's bleak looks, living away from his parents, endeavouring to meet the expectations of his father and justifying the trust of his teachers. It also made him self-sufficient and independent. He was a man of deep faith and strong character. He never shaved his face, and the short black well-trimmed beard made him look order than his years and matched his inner reserve and outer demeanour. On this occasion when people came to felicitate him he summoned a weak smile, bowed from the waist, thanked them with courtesy and attributed his good fortune to God's favour.

In the late summer of 1873 Nur presented her husband with the finest gift she could produce. On 29 September a

child was born to the couple, their first of many. It was a daughter, and she was given the name of Barkat – blessing, good beginning. The christening was apt but ominous. The little mite was a good start, too good a start. Eleven children followed her, enough to fill the large houses acquired or lived in by the family.

FAREWELL TO KAHNUWAN

Ghulam Nabi raised with Zuhra the question of the family's plans for the future. She said this was not the time for making any far-reaching decisions. Let a few years pass before they chose between staying on in Kahnuwan and moving elsewhere. He was too young to take such major decisions. Ghulam Nabi accepted the rebuke contained in the order. He went to Lahore and took up an appointment in the provincial medical department, and was a little later transferred to Amritsar, where he stayed until 1878. Ghulam Muhammad and Ghulam Qadir accompanied him and went to school at both places. Ghulam Nabi had two more daughters during this period: Fatima was born on 26 October 1874, and Wazir or Hurmat on 21 October 1876.

Zuhra presided over the Kahnuwan establishment in her lonely splendour. Her sons came to visit her from time to time. Nur arrived regularly to deliver her children. In three years Zuhra realized that the decision about the Kahnuwan property could not be postponed any further. Her will was strong. The impress of her personality was deep. The memory and posthumous influence of Waziruddin were active agents in the town. Yet, she was but a woman of the nineteenth century, with no brothers or grown-up sons to back up her edicts. Ghulam Nabi was now a civil servant and, though Amritsar was not too far away, could not come running to Kahnuwan or go to the district headquarters in Gurdaspur to solve the serious problems which arose from

time to time. Azizuddin was almost a stranger, and was beginning to press his demand for a division of the estate and the payment of his share. It was clear that none of Waziruddin's sons was likely to make a home in Kahnuwan. Was there any point in Zuhra's continued stay there? Could she go on managing the estate for God knows how many years to come? Her attachment to the estate was stronger than her sons', but she no longer found it practicable to run the property single-handedly and in isolation while her children were scattered around the province. The time had arrived for taking the final decision to leave or not to leave Kahnuwan.

All the sons and a few surviving elders from Mukerian, Kaithan and Dasuha were asked to come to Kahnuwan in the summer of 1876. The family council met in a formal gathering, but soon found that its function had been reduced to ratifying what Zuhra, in private consultation with Ghulam Nabi, had already decided. One or two cousins from across the river invited the family to Mukerian or Dasuha to join the clan already established there. Zuhra overruled them. If she left Kahnuwan she would prefer to be nearer the centre of things where her sons were more likely to be stationed. Lahore and Amritsar were considered as future homes. Lahore, in spite of the excitement it had provided to Zuhra a few years ago, was rejected because of its alien culture, its large size and the distance. Ghulam Nabi was living in Amritsar and it was nearer than Lahore, and though a few marriages had taken place between the Kahnuwanian branch and some families in Amritsar, the suggestion fell through. A family which had lived the life of zamindars for centuries found it difficult to contemplate making a home in a solidly urban territory. The search was confined to middle ground, a place where old traditions still ruled but modernity and the pressure of change could be accommodated.

As consideration and debate progressed the list of possibilities was reduced. Finally Zuhra and the sons agreed on weighing the pros and cons of Batala as their future home.

Batala had many attractions to offer and a few associations. Since the time of Ghulam Nabi's grandfather the family had had some connections with the town. Accompanied by members of the clan from the villages lying between Kahnuwan and Batala, Waziruddin and his father had often gone to Batala to buy large quantities of cloth, utensils and other articles for weddings. Later Azizuddin had got a revenue appointment in the town and made it his home. Ghulam Nabi had gone to school there and spent ten bitter-sweet years in his brother's house. Some marriages had taken place between the families in the hinterland and a few already settled in Batala. A small colony of Kakkezais lived in the town, mainly clustered inside the Hathi, Thatiari and Kapuri Gates and on the Tibba. On considerations of blood, clan loyalty and other family associations Batala provided a most suitable and congenial substitute for Kahnuwan. Zuhra and his sons and (if they chose) their descendants would not be living in Batala amid strangers. The cosiness of close relationship would develop with time, but even the introductory beginnings would be neither inauspicious nor inhospitable.

Batala fulfilled the requirements of a home-base which was neither painfully urban nor uncouthly rural. It was free of the claustrophobia of a congested town of houses built with party walls in long suffocating terraces in narrow lanes. There were many small homesteads of modest dimensions, but even these had deep verandas, large roofed openings, balconies overlooking the bazaars, and large internal, enclosed courtyards. But there was also a good many mansions of ducal proportions dating from late Mughal age or recent Sikh period. They were in varying states of repair, and not all of them were occupied by the descendants of the

original builders or proprietors. The great advantage of these havelis in the configuration of the town was that they blurred the physical effects of narrow streets and short lanes. Every now and then the monotony and contiguity of a row of shops or a cluster of small houses was broken by the solid mass and large size of a haveli or a mosque or a school or a temple or by a vacant expanse of land. The general feel of living in an open space was enhanced by the presence of vast rooftops and the various uses to which they were put.

In terms of area the town was small. One could walk from Hathi Gate in the south to the Teli Gate in the north, the entire length of the town, in about 20-30 minutes, depending on one's age. The width of the town was a slightly shorter walk. Except for the Teli Gate, which led to the corn market, the caravanserai, the trunk road and later the railway station and the coach terminus, all egresses out of the town opened directly into fields or market gardens. There were no sprawling developments, no ribbon colonies, no unnatural external growths. The town, old and living and active, had been placed, as if by a giant hand, in the middle of lush farmland. The black-grey ramparts and the green fields had only a few feet of macadamized circular road between them.

In its mood, too, the town was an exhilarating blend of urban elegance and rustic simplicity. Most of the population was made up of artisans engaged in cottage industry, privately owned in every case and of a small scale, market gardeners and petty landholders and the men who worked on these lands, and some gentlefolk who lived on their pensions or private income. There were some rich families, Muslim and Hindu, residing in impressive havelis. The town did not think or behave like a habitation aspiring to be a city. It was urbane without being urban, lively without being crowded. Its past as a centre of traditional learning civilized its present. Even those who had always lived within the

boundary walls felt and imbibed the healing touch of nature during their long morning and evening walks amid the surrounding fields. The old and the new mingled and lived in outer equanimity and inner serenity.

Yes. If Kahnuwan had to be vacated, there was no better place to go to than Batala.

All the pain of the family at saying goodbye to Kahnuwan gathered itself into a knot in Zuhra's heart; of all those now leaving it she had lived here the longest. The sons had gone "abroad" at an early age. The daughters of the clan had been married to men who lived across the river or in the hinterland between Kahnuwan and Batala. Waziruddin was dead. Shamsuddin had made his home in Mukerian many years ago. But Zuhra had spent all her married life here, become a part of the place, put her roots down in the soil, lived in state in a complex of havelis, made friends, patronised the cultivators and the peasants and the farm labourers, and since her husband's death managed the estate. She had walked through these fields a hundred times, held *milads* and other religious and social functions for over 25 years, recruited new servants from among the local lads and lasses, and entertained visitors and guests. Every important event of her life had happened here. Her children were born here. Her husband was buried here. She was not leaving behind a group of residences or a few squares of land, but vital landmarks of her life. She was parting with the only life she had known. It was like dying, not a little, but a great deal. It was a wrench of agonizing pain.

She was the only one to mourn the move. There were nights when sleep did not come to assuage the heart-ache. There were hours when she wept like a child. There were moments when she thought her heart would break. Loneliness exacerbated her suffering and assaulted her capacity to bear it. She missed Waziruddin even more. His absence was no longer a gap in her life. It was now a fissure which cleaved her whole existence.

Few women could have survived the rack. Zuhra not only survived but lived to ride again. She was still in her mid-forties and in very good health. Facing crises was not a new trial. She had determination and will, in part inherited and in part born of her love for her sons, which saved her from collapse. The future of her sons was paramount. For its sake she would abandon her past life, leave Kahnuwan, make a new home in Batala, and let her bark sail the alien waters. God had been with her so far. He will be by her side wherever she went.

Between September and December 1876 Zuhra was seeking buyers for her property. The estate was too large to attract one customer. This was not the western Punjab of big zamindars and tumandars. Shihabuddin's sons were asked if they wanted to add to their Mukerian property. None was interested or perhaps could not spare the cash. Eventually everything was sold in portions but at no noticeable financial disadvantage.

When Waziruddin died he had 20 squares of land, fertile, productive and well watered, a *hikmatkhana* (clinic) of considerable size and reputation, one palatial haveli which dated back to over a hundred years and had been extended and partly reconstructed by him and his father, 4 smaller havelis which he had purchased from Shihabuddin when the latter had taken his share and crossed the river, a dozen shops, one large stable, a few dozen heads of cattle, 2 Persian-wheel wells, and a mosque of decent proportions. Some buyers came from the town itself and some from outside. Everything was disposed of except the mosque and two squares of land. This portion was converted into a charitable trust, one half of its income to be spent on the upkeep of the mosque and the other half on aiding a primary school established by Waziruddin on his mother's death and named after her as the Sultan School.

The proceeds were divided among the legal heirs. The bulk of course went to the four brothers. Azizuddin received

his due share. Ghulam Qadir and Ghulam Muhammad were minors, and their shares passed temporarily into Zuhra's control as a trust. Zuhra asserted her independence and headship of the family by receiving the equivalent of the sale price of two squares of land and of one of the small havelis of the Kahnuwan complex. Ghulam Nabi received his rightful share and immediately put it into a joint account with Nur – the first case in my family of a husband-wife joint possession.

While customers for the Kahnuwan estate were being sought and then the prices negotiated Ghulam Nabi was looking for a suitable house in Batala and a small piece of agricultural land nearby. He spent many Sundays and other holidays in Batala, surveying properties as they came on the market. When he liked a house or two, he took Zuhra and Nur to the town to have a look at them. He had an aristocratic frame of mind and, with Azizuddin out of reckoning, was the *de jure* head of the family, though Zuhra continued to hold all de facto powers. This sharing, or more truly surrender, of authority did not bother him in the least, so strong was the bond between mother and son and so great the son's trust in the mother's prudence and experience. Nor did Nur give the situation a second, not to speak of a first, thought. By now she had unbreachable confidence in her husband. Zuhra's love for her favourite son encompassed his wife, and the two women had developed a mother-daughter relationship. Thus in everything Zuhra's writ ran, unquestioned and unquestionable.

After many visits to Batala spent in scrutinising the available properties, Zuhra, Ghulam Nabi and Nur agreed on acquiring a huge Sikh haveli in Bazaar Kalan or Main Bazaar (High Street in modern parlance). Among the trusted army commanders of Maharaja Ranjit Singh there had been one Khundawala who had bought or built two havelis for his two sons, one on either side of the bazaar. The one on the eastern side, owned by one of Khundawala's sons, was now available for sale and the Kahnuwan trio liked it.

It was a large rambling complex consisting of one principal residence of two storeys in the centre, three smaller havelis touching the main building, one large piece of open space, and ten shops backing on to the haveli and the open space with their fronts opening into the bazaar. The complex ran along the main bazaar on one side, its longest stretch, and then at its north end turned eastward along another street. On the back of the complex lay a huddle of about thirty small houses which had once been the residential quarters of General Khundawala's captains and majors and other staff officers.

The price demanded by Khundawala was reasonable, though Ghulam Nabi estimated a further investment of several thousand rupees in renovation, repair and partial reconstruction. The ten shops could be rented out or converted into servant quarters. There was no well in the complex or outside it, and water would have to be brought in by water carriers from the well in the mosque located a few hundred yards down the bazaar. Some parts of the building were in good state and Zuhra could move in immediately with her servants. The complex was purchased in December 1876 in the joint names of Ghulam Nabi and Nur.

Two squares of agricultural land lying to the east of the town near Anarkali and behind Sher Singh's palace were bought to enable the family to receive its supply of wheat, corn, grams, vegetables, chicken, eggs, mutton, milk and clarified butter from its own property. Ghulam Nabi purchased the house he was living in Amritsar. One house of reasonable size near Kapuri Gate was also acquired and rented out. Ghulam Nabi bought some shares in two British oil companies with their head office in Calcutta. The rest of the money he banked in Amritsar.

What was to be done with the money which belonged to Ghulam Qadir and Ghulam Muhammad? Putting the whole amount in a bank was not a good investment. The rate of

interest was low. Zuhra decided the issue. One large house was bought for Ghulam Qadir inside Thatiari Gate, to be handed over to him on his marriage. Another of larger size was purchased for Ghulam Muhammad, to be turned over to him when he became independent. The remainder of their shares was invested in banks. Zuhra refused to debit Ghulam Qadir's income for what she spent on his education or later on his marriage. Ghulam Nabi had, so to say, adopted Ghulam Muhammad, and did not touch his share or income for a single paisa. He said he would meet all the youngster's needs from his own budget until the day he began to earn enough to rear a family. He kept his word. About 80 years later this generosity was returned when Ghulam Muhammad's eldest son, Abdul Hakim, rescued my father from desperate financial straits.

With all this settled, it remained for the family to say its last farewells to Kahnuwan. On a Friday in the month of December (1876) Zuhra, Ghulam Nabi, Nur, Ghulam Qadir and Ghulam Muhammad visited the graves of their ancestors and forefathers for the last time, said their last prayers in the mosque, and received their neighbours, friends, acquaintances and former peasants and cultivators. The mood was sombre. All hearts were heavy. Many tears were shed, more copiously by the womenfolk. Old retainers received generous handshakes, others were granted adequate pensions. Over a score of them preferred to move to Batala to continue to serve the family, including the barber and the minstrel (hereditary *mirasi*). Long and lachrymose goodbyes were said. Prayers and good wishes were uttered. Everyone blessed everyone else. At mid-morning the last descendants of Abdul Baqi left Kahnuwan after living and burying their dead there for 300 years. An axe was put to the last of the deep roots of the family.

Forsaking one's home sears the soul. Man and home have gone together since the world began. Before man began

to wear any clothes or erect a roof over his head he had a place to live, even if it were the top of a tree or the floor of a cave. Zuhra and her sons were going away under the pressure of circumstances and in the interest of the family. They were moving under duress, but in peace. There was no abrupt and sudden severance of relationships. One home was being exchanged for another. It was very very painful, but the decision was their own. The departure was a sad event but also an elegant one. Farewells were said with mutual goodwill. Seventy-one years later Ghulam Nabi's older son (my father) and his family were condemned to abandon their home in Batala in fire and blood, not to migrate to another home but to walk into a wilderness which had neither refuge nor sanctuary. They were to be uprooted a second time and lead the life of wanderers in search of a haven, and the haven was to be denied to them. It is good that mankind cannot see its future. If it could, most of it would die before living that future. The God who ordained this is verily merciful and gracious.

THE NEW HOME: BATALA

The former lady of Kahnuwan and her sons arrived in Batala, ate a delayed midday meal, rested their limbs, and started a new life in a new place. Ghulam Nabi stayed at home for another two days and then left for Amritsar, leaving Nur behind to help Zuhra turn a house into a home. The two women arranged everything to their own satisfaction, as had been their wont in Lahore (for Nur) and Kahnuwan (for Zuhra). It was a bit hard on Nur, for she had three small daughters to look after, one of them a baby of 2 months (the last to be born in Kahnuwan). But she was young, resilient, eager to please Zuhra, anxious to put everything in ship-shape condition before Ghulam Nabi and his brothers paid their next visit. The army of servants was a great help.

Rooms were allotted, furniture was moved, a proper kitchen was set up, and dozens of lamps and lanterns were purchased. The servants were housed in a 5-room haveli separated from the main haveli but within the complex. Two water carriers were employed to keep up the water supply. Fuel wood and dung cakes were stocked. The manager of the family's new farmland near Anarkali, who had been brought from Kahnuwan, was told the number and quantity of items to be delivered and the times of delivery. Two of the servants were given security duties. Within a few days the women had settled down in the new residence and liked it, though Zuhra's heart still beat a little faster when her thoughts flitted to Kahnuwan.

In the spring of 1877, after the harvest time, Zuhra invited all the relatives from Mukerian, Kaithan and Dasuha to come for a few days to see her new home and enjoy her hospitality. They responded with pleasure. The sons came from Amritsar during the Easter holidays. The guests arrived in instalments. Soon the gathering of the clan was complete. Every room, corridor, veranda and roof rang with the sound of animated conversation, the grave and low-pitched voices of the elders, the more loud talk among the not so old, the happy notes and laughter of the young, and the screams and screeches of the children. The house was full of words and laughter and smell of nicely cooked food. Everyone indulged in high spirits. Zuhra and Nur were happy because everybody liked the house. The revel lasted for ten days. And then the usual goodbyes, embraces, handshakes, thank yous, promises to meet again, leisurely departures in groups. And at the end the two women and three children and the calm and quiet. The servants were glad at the end of their long and heavy duties, though they were good and loyal and used to hard work. The housewarming was over. The haveli was now a normal residence; the sheen of newness rubbed out by time and visits.

Nur did not go to Amritsar with Ghulam Nabi. She hated to leave Zuhra in her lonely magnificence. She also knew how desolate Zuhra felt at remembrances of times past. She herself was sprightly and cheerful and light of heart, and wanted to pass on some of her geniality and blitheness to the older woman. She craved to see Zuhra as she had been with Waziruddin in Kahnuwan. She discovered that if she tried a little she could achieve much. So strong was the tie of love between them that Zuhra found it easy to share the spark of light in Nur's eyes, to partake of her optimism, to borrow her sunny temperament, to feel young. They smiled and laughed at the same jokes. They took interest in the same things. They played with the three baby girls, mimicked them, made faces at them. Despite so many servants, they experimented with cooking new dishes, dyed their *dopattas*, sewed heir dresses, and did so many other things together. They lived like friends or sisters. Nur made Zuhra into a new woman, just as she had made Ghulam Nabi a new man in Lahore seven years ago. She gave Zuhra, literally, a new hold on life. The endeavour was worth the result. And she smiled at her handiwork.

Once the establishment was running smoothly, and the servants accustomed to their new duties and surroundings, the two women decided that it was time to move out and seek some excitement. They made careful plans as if they were hatching a conspiracy. Not that they were afraid of anyone. Women who had gone shopping in Lahore several years ago could have no fears. The plans concerned the places to visit and the families to cultivate.

The summer months of 1877 were spent within the house. Some repairs which could not wait were made; some local women were tried as maidservants and rejected, and a few journeys were made to Amritsar. Once the rains had come and gone and cooler weather set in, Zuhra and Nur began to put their plans into practice. Shopping or even looking at the shops was out of the question. In small towns

women of good families never visited the bazaar. Even the upper middle class ladies and grown-up girls hated to be seen in public. Lahore had been different, and ambitions of personal purchase were postponed till they found a chance to go there. But there were other places to see and visit.

Over the next three months they visited all the historical sights around the town. Nothing was overlooked. They went to Anarkali and its Italianate Sikh palace which was now in the hands of the Church Missionary Society, the nearby tank, the largest in northern India, the hajirah, and the Christian missionary cottages which were coming up near the northern side of the tank. On the western side of the town they saw the medieval Bhandari complex of temples and tanks, but only from the outside. No Muslim was allowed entry. Their forays were made in *dolis*, wooden seats with thick cushions, covered with curtains, and carried by four men (*kahars*) by putting their shoulders under the ends of the two long bamboo poles nailed to the body of the seat. This contraption was an ancient Indian means of transport for both upper class men and women. In the more recent past men had given it up in favour of a variety of carriages. The *doli* or *palki* was either owned or hired. When it was to be used it was brought into the courtyard, the two ladies (the maximum capacity of the seats inside) stepped in, the curtains on all sides were drawn together tightly, and the four *kahars* lifted it, two in the front and two in the rear, placed the ends of the poles on their shoulders and carried it to wherever the passengers wanted to go. At the destination they gently lowered the *doli* to the ground and drew aside or lifted up the curtains. The ladies stepped out as daintily and gingerly as their status or health dictated. The *kahars* stood a few yards away with their backs to the ladies (if they were hired labourers) or nearby facing the passengers (if they were from the household staff). On her arrival in Batala Zuhra

had ordered six *dolis* for the house, three double-seater and three single-seater. During family reunions and the stay of many visitors more *dolis* were hired when needed.

There were more than a score of Kakkezai families living in Batala, some of whom were distantly related to Ghulam Nabi. Zuhra and Nur short-listed those to be cultivated, and these were visited and then invited to meals. Two or three non-Kakkezai families were included in this inner circle. Close friendly terms developed with the families of Mian Husain Bakhsh (Mian Fazli Husain's father) inside Pahari Gate, Nawab Maula Bakhsh inside Teli Gate, and the old Mian clan inside Nasirul Haq Gate. A group of relatives (near and remote) and friends emerged in which Zuhra and Nur could move and enjoy themselves.

On 13 April 1878 Nur gave birth to still another girl, who was named Fatima. A few months later Ghulam Nabi resigned his government job in Amritsar and went away to Banda in the then North Western Provinces of Agra and Oudh (the later United Provinces). Nothing is known about this appointment. But it must have been to his liking because he stayed there for four years. Nur accompanied him but spent 3 or 4 months of each year in Batala. Zuhra visited Banda when the fancy moved her, but firmly refused to migrate. She told Ghulam Nabi that for her one move (from Kahnuwan) was enough for a lifetime, and now Batala was her home and that was where she wanted to end her days and be consigned to mother earth. Ghulam Qadir and Ghulam Muhammad went to Banda from Amritsar.

By the end of his second year in Banda (1880) Ghulam Nabi had developed sufficiently strong connections to get his brother placed in a respectable government employment. Ghulam Qadir had matriculated in Amritsar and shown little inclination for further studies. He was easygoing of temperament, rather indolent, devoted to literary pursuits, obsessively fond of Persian poetry, and well trained in the art

of Persian and Urdu prose composition. The best that Ghulam Nabi could do for him was to get him appointed a *naib-tahsildar* in the provincial revenue department. This was done at some time in 1880. It is reported that Ghulam Qadir was very happy to serve in the area because it gave him an opportunity to further his interest in Persian studies and perfect his talent in *insha* (elegant prose writing) in Urdu. His first appointment was in Dodhi in district Mirzapur. He refused all transfers, fell in love with Dodhi, later persuaded his wife to love it too, received his promotions without changing stations, denied his last promotion because it meant leaving Dodhi, and retired from there as the senior most *tahsildar* in the history of the district of Mirzapur. One result of his long stay there was that later he sent his eldest son, Abdul Hamid, to MAO College in Aligarh for his post-school studies.

Once Ghulam Qadir was settled in life Zuhra decided to marry him off. For her bride she chose Piranditti, the eldest child and the elder daughter of Shaikh Shamsuddin (namesake of Waziruddin's cousin but a different person). Shamsuddin's family was settled partly in Batala and partly in three villages near it. Zuhra also decided to marry Ghulam Muhammad at the same time. He protested that he was still a student and it was unfair to make him a family man before he had a job. But Zuhra overruled him, arguing that he was 18 and therefore old enough to marry, that Ghulam Nabi himself had married when he was still studying medicine, and that anyway she wanted her youngest daughter-in-law to spend part of her time with her in Batala. He demurred. A wife for Ghulam Muhammad was found in Kaithan-Dasuha, where Sharfuddin (a cousin of Waziruddin's at some removes) and Khairunnisa had a good looking girl of marriageable age.

Both young men were married in 1880 in Batala on successive days. Incidentally this began the family tradition

of holding multiple weddings at the same time; it was so convenient both for the parents of the boy and the girl and for the guests, and saved much energy, considerable time, and some money. Ghulam Qadir took Piranditti to Dodhi. Ghulam Muhammad returned to Banda and his schooling, leaving his wife with Zuhra in Batala, with plans, which he faithfully executed, to spend all his holidays in Batala.

Eighteen eighty was indeed an eventful year for the family. Azizuddin decided to leave Sharfo for another woman. It is reported that during his official duties he came into contact with a Pathan Sayyid family and promptly fell in love with its only young daughter who at this time must have been in her mid-teens. The maiden responded favourably to the courtship of the 45-year old *patwari*. Nothing is known about the background of the Pathan family. A quick wedding was arranged and Azizuddin brought the dazzlingly beautiful Fazl Bibi into his Khanda Khola residence and asked Sharfo and their two sons to vacate the house. He must have been elated as much at his release from Sharfo's cruel thraldom as by the love of the new wife. Sharfo's protests were dismissed as firmly as she had dismissed his requests to be kind and temperate and prudent during the 16 years of their married life.

Sharfo's ungovernable ego had never allowed her even to conceive such an end to her marriage. Azizuddin was a placid man, calm by temperament, mild in the expression of his views and opinions, prepared to tolerate unpleasant things, not easily aroused or disturbed. But now the worm turned. A time comes in the life of the most serene of men when they cannot see their life going to ruin with equanimity. Azizuddin had seen and heard and suffered much. Now he had found refuge and peace in the love of another woman. The release was so great that he could not let the presence of Sharfo cloud the beautiful horizon of his new life. He ordered her out of the house with his two sons, one aged nine and the other only one.

Where could Sharfo go? Not to her parents' home in Kaithan where she was not welcome. Not to a separate and independent home which she could not afford. She found her only haven in the house of the boy whom she had tortured for two years a long time ago in Batala. Only Ghulam Nabi's house could take her in. This was an emergency and Zuhra and Nur had to take a prompt decision. They asked Sharfo to move in with them at the principal haveli. At the same time an urgent message was sent to Banda summoning Ghulam Nabi to Batala. When he arrived and heard the whole story he not only approved the two women's decision to shelter Sharfo but complimented Nur on her generosity and kindness in forgetting Sharfo's past and coming to her rescue. Knowing Ghulam Nabi's past experience with Sharfo, Zuhra left the final decision to him. If he was prepared to forgive her sister-in-law and make her and her two sons welcome in the family's bosom she would stand by what he did. Ghulam Nabi's compassion was put to the hardest possible test, and it triumphed. He also pleaded with Nur to appreciate the plight of the scorned woman who was also her elder sister. She too emerged from this trial with her honour intact. Both man and wife agreed, and Zuhra approved, that Sharfo and her sons would henceforth be a part of the family, live in the haveli permanently, and all the expenses involved charged to Ghulam Nabi's account.

This was a signal proof of Ghulam Nabi's and Nur's large-heartedness and loyalty to the family. From that time till her death more than forty years later Sharfo lived in the haveli at Ghulam Nabi's expense. Not only that, but Ghulam Nabi educated her two sons, got them jobs according to their qualifications, and gave two of his daughters in marriage to the two boys. But nothing could change Sharfo's nature. Living in that house as a dependent, she was no more than correct and formal in her

relationship with Zuhra who was the head of the family. She did not show or express much gratitude to Ghulam Nabi. She was generally cool and at times unpleasant to Nur. And yet everyone tolerated her and no one insulted her.

Ghulam Nabi did not let this separation alienate him from Azizuddin. He was not only his eldest brother and a much-abused husband but also the man with whom he had lived for ten years as a school student. Nothing could break these bonds. The brothers continued to love and respect each other. But Azizuddin rarely visited the haveli.

As for Fazl Bibi, who had caused this stir in the family, surprisingly everyone (except Sharfo and her sons) seemed to like her in spite of her Pathan bouts of ill temper which however became less frequent and vigorous as her years advanced. As she had no children of her own, after her husband's death in 1924 she too became Ghulam Nabi's responsibility. As Azizuddin's sons claimed the ownership of his haveli in Khanda Khola, Ghulam Nabi bought her a small house inside Thatiari Gate and put her in charge of two of his servants, man and wife, who soon discovered that it was not difficult to become devoted to the old woman. After Ghulam Nabi's death two years later my father took charge of her. She died in 1939 and was buried in Batala.

In September 1881 Nur gave birth to her fifth daughter, who was christened Allah Rakhi (but commonly called Rakho).

In 1882 Ghulam Muhammad passed his matriculation examination from Banda and joined the Medical School in Lahore on Ghulam Nabi's insistence and strong recommendation. He had performed poorly in his finals at the school and it was only on Ghulam Nabi's encouragement that he agreed to read medicine. By now the School had reasonable hostel facilities and Ghulam Muhammad entered as a residential scholar. His wife continued to live in Batala with Zuhra.

THE BIRTH OF A SON: 1884

In the same year Ghulam Nabi made another move, left Banda, rejoined the Punjab medical service and was posted to Peshawar as Assistant Surgeon. He was given a commodious official house to live in, an old-style British bungalow with large rooms and extensive lawns, and situated in a quiet and leafy part of the cantonment far away from the crowd and hubbub of the walled city. He liked the station, the accommodation and his duties.

He wanted Nur to stay with him and share the comforts provided by the job. He also wanted to impress his mother with his new lifestyle. More importantly, he had not lived with his mother for any length of time since his childhood years and he had a craving for wallowing in the joy of her presence in the house and receiving her affection in a continuum rather than, as it had been happening, off and on during his visits to Batala or her visits to Amritsar. He begged Zuhra to come and live with him. The mother could not refuse, and the three woman (Zuhra, Nur and Ghulam Muhammad's wife) left the Batala residence in the keeping of Sharfo and a few servants and came to Peshawar. For nearly three years the family lived together, sharing each other's happiness, seeing the sights of the area, enjoying a new "colonial" lifestyle, and playing with the five little daughters. Ghulam Muhammad spent all his holidays with them, where he received as much coaching in his studies as Ghulam Nabi could manage.

The north-west frontier, though administratively still a part of the Punjab, was so different from the rest of India that it looked and felt a novel world. Food, clothes, language, culture, weather – everything was new and a source of interest and amusement to the Punjabi family. In the three years that he spent there Ghulam Nabi picked up a good deal of spoken Pashto. Most of the patients knew no other tongue, and the

same was true of many shopkeepers and tonga drivers and the lower staff of the hospital. Though it caused some difficulties in the beginning, it proved a useful incentive to learn the local lingo. Before he left he was fluent in it. The women could only acquire a smattering for lack of exposure to the world outside the bungalow.

Life in Peshawar was uneventful but not uninteresting. The news from Batala and Lahore was reassuring. Sharfo was entrenched in the principal haveli with her two sons, and the modest income, in kind and cash, from the Anarkali farm flowed in regularly. In Lahore Ghulam Muhammad was learning to work hard, to live away from Ghulam Nabi's overpowering shadow and diligent coaching. He had passed his first year examination with marks which could be called respectable, though Ghulam Nabi was far from pleased. In his relationship with Ghulam Muhammad the older brother kept love, hope and discipline in even balance. He loved him like a son and expected him to do well in life. The three summer vacations and other holidays which the youngster spent in Peshawar contributed remarkably to his proficiency in his studies, particularly in the practical experience of watching him how the sick were handled and healed, diagnosis made, prescriptions written out, medicines made up, and surgery done. In his third long vacation he served as an unofficial assistant to his brother, seeing patients, prescribing drugs, giving injections, and even performing minor operations. With the hawk-eyed Ghulam Nabi standing over him, metaphorically always, physically often, his concentration was complete and his effort to do the right thing earnest. He made noticeable progress every year, and his Principal, Dr. Burton Brown, who had known Ghulam Nabi very well as a student, sent a personal assessment report to Peshawar every January as a kind of a reply to Ghulam Nabi's new year card, telling him how well the young man was doing. Ghulam Nabi's strategy was just to inform Ghulam Muhammad that

his teachers were "not displeased" with his work but to withhold the more heartening passages lest the young man became complacent. But he knew the boy was shaping well, and this made him happy.

In this process Ghulam Muhammad's wife acted as another goad. In her own gentle, roundabout but persistent way she was urging him to harder work by saying that she expected him to do as well as his brother. With this double pressure on him, he could not afford to be lazy, smug or inattentive. But, above all these considerations, what really drove him onwards was the kindnesses he had received and was receiving from Ghulam Nabi. He was now mature enough to realize what a gem of a brother he had, and with this awareness came an overpowering wish to return these favours by showing good results.

Both at home and in the hospital Ghulam Nabi was finding his life satisfying. He had a mother to whom he could always turn for sagacious advice, a loving wife who was as intelligent as she was charming, a younger sister-in-law who was obedient and a help in the house, and five young daughters who were a handful but also a pleasure to play with.

To this happiness was added a greater gladness when he had his first son. Nur performed this remarkable feat on 24 January 1884. The boy, my father, was given the name of Abdul Aziz. In the east, and especially in the traditional landholding families, everyone expects (only God knows why!) a married woman to produce a male child within a year or so of the wedding. Her failure makes people unhappy. When a girl appears in place of a boy, nobody is excited. If girls start arriving in seemingly unending plurality, there is a crisis. The elders begin to mutter, to allude to second marriages, even to mention divorce.

In thirteen years of married life Nur had given birth to five daughters. The family had not uttered a word of disapproval, nor made the most indirect reference to her failure to fulfil its

expectations, nor taunted her at her inability to do what every married woman (!) did. Only Sharfo had once been heard by Zuhra to have let a syllable of disapproval and a word of criticism escape her lips. She had been warned that a repetition or the slightest expression, through word or deed or sign, of her hostility would result in her expulsion from the house which had given her refuge and support when she had no place in the world to go to.

Of course the family dearly wanted a son. Who doesn't? Particularly after Nur had demonstrated that she was not sterile the family expected a male child in due course. When girls began to arrive with clockwork regularity and nobody could predict an end to the procession, any normal family would have reacted with impatience, knitting its brows, even if not speaking a word. This family did not.

All the three persons who mattered were exceptional in their outlook. Zuhra, the grande dame, the centre of power and the great mother-in-law, who should have been the first to show her displeasure, was a woman of a rare stamp. She believed in no conventions except those which touched the honour of the family. Waziruddin had moulded her according to his own modern values and beliefs. She had a will of her own, and was not at all averse to exercising it. She was also acutely intelligent, and knew that the sex of the children was determined by nature, not by the mother. She was also very fond of Nur, and prepared to make any sacrifice for the sake of her happiness. She was so partial to her that even if Ghulam Nabi had hinted at a second marriage she would have ordered him out of the house. So much for the mother-in-law, the proverbial and potential source of all mischief and danger.

The husband was driven by two eternal forces of incalculable power: God and love. His faith in Islam had become deep and his practice of it regular and genuine at an unusually early age. He was convinced that everything was

determined by a Divinity whose wisdom was supreme. He had prayed for a son, but neither craved for one nor felt the slightest resentment against his wife for not producing one. These things came through a heavenly decree, not man's act or desire.

Ghulam Nabi also wore an armour, made of his love for Nur, against all disappointments and frustrations. The links that bound them together were born of mutual understanding over a number of years, but he had liked her and she him since their wedding day. Nur did not have that exciting beauty which fascinates and enslaves men, and often with time pales into plainness leaving men with a depressing feeling of having been deceived or cheated by life. Instead, she possessed an attractive mould and an inner character which draw men to these qualities by slow degrees, by a persistence which they are unable to resist. Like an army on a slow but triumphant march such a woman conquers by stages, consolidating one territory before advancing to the next victory, and so on. The progress is slow but its fruits are for ever. There is no cunning or planning or deviousness in this. It comes naturally as if by instinct.

It was by this slow process of husbanding her resources and exploiting her gains that Nur had won the trust and affection of her husband These invaluable feelings had matured into a love which was neither "at first sight" variety nor of a "surrender to a dazzling face" kind. It was a plant of slow growth, putting its roots down with gentle but irresistible strength, sprouting shoots and boughs and leaves, growing daily in stature and girth without anyone noticing the change, slowly becoming a stately tree which no storm could bend and no axe could fell. Such was the love that united Nur and Ghulam Nabi, and before it the absence of a son had been an insignificant omission. The deprivation might even have brought them still closer.

The wife, the party most deeply affected and involved, offered a paradox of emotions and calculations. An

ordinary, normal married woman with five daughters should have worried herself to maddening distraction, if not the proverbial death. She had been married now for 13 years. Her mother-in-law had been living with her most of this time. She had produced 5 children, none of them male. After Azizuddin's second marriage and virtual exclusion from the family, her husband was the head of the clan and must be badly wanting a male successor. She had failed to produce a son. With these stark and bleak realities of life arrayed before her in all these years Nur should have been a deeply troubled woman, almost at the edge of a trough of despair. She was not.

The secret of her success in keeping the monster of apprehension at bay lay in many things: the conviction that Zuhra was her loyal ally, the knowledge that Ghulam Nabi's love for her was immune from all buffets of ill wind, her majestic superiority to any words or signs of disfavour or disapproval issuing from Sharfo's person, an optimism which saw uneven patches of life as a prelude to a smooth ride rather than as an immutable pattern of existence, and finally a healthy outlook on life born of an insight into the final purpose and of the human span in this world.

Zuhra had always given her the love of a mother and more recently the camaraderie of an elder sister. She had never behaved like a mother-in-law, the horrifying spectre of every married girl. Nur was sure that, son or no son, Zuhra would not let anything stand between them. This was an assurance worth rubies and pearls. She had a trust of the same degree in her husband's love and affection. She was proud that she had won over a man of his qualities and virtues. She knew him well. If she did not bear a son, he would continue to love her no less. This guarantee had enabled her to go through a son-less life with undisturbed calm.

Sharfo was her elder sister and now very much a member of the household, but Nur gave no more importance to her

repeated comments and gibes than to a buzzing wasp. This attitude was neither a pose nor an expression of arrogance; though, had she been a different woman, she could have behaved disdainfully with the right on her side. Was it not Sharfo who had put a little Ghulam Nabi to mental torture in his innocent years and killed his boyhood? Was it not Sharfo who had propelled her own husband into the arms of another woman and then received her own marching orders from her home? Had not Sharfo and her two young sons then come to her (Nur's) house in desperate straits, and had she not welcomed them, offered them sympathy and succour, allowed them to stay in the Batala haveli permanently at her expense, and never, even in a light moment or in a most indirect manner, referred to what Ghulam Nabi had received at her hands for three horrid years? Nur had the heart of a lioness and the generosity of a princess. Her superiority came from her breeding and nature, not from deliberate choice or conscious effort. In her dealings with Sharfo she was courteous and correct. She was free with the money she gave her or spent on her sons' schooling. Otherwise Sharfo was a speck on her consciousness, and nothing more. She treated her alleged or actual remarks with contemptuous forgetfulness and went her own way.

Nature too had armed Nur with optimism and contentment which saved her from dark thoughts. God had given her so much, blessed her with His mercies, endowed her with all comforts of life. What did the absence of a son matter? She lived up to her name and walked in light. (In Arabic, Persian, Urdu and Punjabi, and probably in other Islamic languages too, *nur* means light, brightness, illumination, spiritual illumination by divine truth).

Yet, the birth of Abdul Aziz brought a glow to every face. Zuhra was glad that a gap had been filled and, according to her fears, the couple saved from a possible feeling of loss. Soon the grandson became the apple of her

eye. Ghulam Nabi was happy at the break in the string of daughters and the assurance of continuity of his male line; he was happier at Nur's release from the sliver of apprehension that somehow she had failed her husband. Nur herself was overjoyed, as much for her own sake as for those of her husband and mother-in-law. Every mother likes a son. Every wife wants to bear one to get nearer to her husband's heart. Every married woman desires to have one to silence the centuries-old taunts, cutting remarks and painful gibes of her in-laws, specially the mother-in-law. Though Nur knew that she was fortunate in having a different kind of husband and mother-in-law, yet a splinter of uncertainty had been troubling her tranquillity. Even that iota of doubt was now gone. She was proud of her son and saw Ghulam Nabi's image in his lineaments. The five girls in the house, ranging in years from 11 to 3, discovered a new toy in the baby-son. According to her age, each one welcomed him with hugs or insistence on carrying him around or gentle touches on his cheeks or chuckles of delight on his earliest smiles. To the youngest, the little Alla Rakhi, it was an unimaginable wonder that a boy could move on his volition and also cry and smile. Her future playmate excited her beyond belief. She began to call him "Kaka" (little or young brother), and still called her that when he was 81 and she was dying.

Verily God's will works in mysterious ways. The family celebrated the birth of its first son to its heart's content and the festivities lasted several months. Zuhra and Nur took the child to Batala for a few weeks, from where, driven by nostalgia, they paid a short visit to Kahnuwan where Waziruddin's grandson was displayed to the town. They returned to Peshawar loaded with congratulations and good wishes which they passed on to Ghulam Nabi. Life came to normal, or perhaps a little more than normal. The baby's first birthday was celebrated on 24 January 1885.

IN THE COMPANY OF A KING: 1885

Two months later something happened which, in the short term, brought an unfortunate crisis in Ghulam Nabi's life, but, in the long, was destined to bring him great honour, affluence and a fascinating experience.

On 28 March 1885, Amir Abdur Rahman Khan, the 41-year old ruler of Afghanistan, arrived in Peshawar on his way to Rawalpindi, on an official visit, for a meeting with the Viceroy of India. Measured by any personal, public or political yardstick, the "iron Amir" was a great personality. He was the recognized head of the Barakzai clan. When he was merely 20, at Dost Muhammad's death, he had become the governor of Afghan Turkestan, and then had followed a dangerous and exciting career of varying fortunes: warlord, refugee, governor of cis-Oxian province, king-maker, exile in the courts of Mashhed, Khiva and Bokhara, a pensioner of the Russians in Samarqand, and finally in 1880 the king of a primitive, disunited and ravaged Afghanistan. All his life, wrote Curzon (who had had a long private meeting with the King) in his *Tales of Travel*, "whether in the forefront or in the background, he presented the single strong figure whose masculine individuality emerged with distinctness from the obscure and internecine and often miserable drama of Afghan politics".

Curzon continues with his portrait of the man: "His characteristics were in some respects even more remarkable than his features. This terribly cruel man could be affable, gracious and considerate to a degree. This man of blood loved scents and colours and gardens and singing birds and flowers. This intensely practical being was a prey to mysticism, for he thought that he saw dreams and visions, and was convinced (although this was probably only a symptom of his vanity) that he possessed supernatural gifts. Generous to those who were useful to him, he was merciless to any whose day was

past or who had lost his favour. But even in the most unpropitious circumstances his humour never deserted him."

On his arrival in Peshawar, the Amir was told by a trembling courtier that his personal physician, an Englishman, had suddenly fallen sick and was unfit to attend on him. How could a King travel without a doctor? The Amir was worried and summoned the Government of India's minister-in-waiting. He ordered that a competent doctor be found immediately who was good at his profession, a practising Muslim, thoroughly reliable, proficient in Persian, and fit to look after a monarch. Officials were hurriedly called to a meeting to deal with this enormous emergency. The future of Anglo-Afghan relations, already at a crucial stage, was at stake. The British civil surgeon of Peshawar was the key man in the search for a suitable appointee. For a few hours he was the most worried man in the city, perhaps in the whole of India. A ruler's personal physician is in many ways the most important man on the royal staff. In his hands lies the health and probably the life of the king. He must know not only his master's state of health but also his mood and habits. A wrong choice could ruin the Amir-Viceroy negotiations. The civil surgeon, in his mind, made a quick survey of every doctor he knew and could think of none except Ghulam Nabi who was good at his job, was a pious Muslim, and could speak tolerable Persian.

Such was the order of priorities that the Amir was informed that the man he needed had been found before the man he needed was consulted. The Amir insisted on an immediate interview. The civil surgeon hastened to Ghulam Nabi's residence, found him at home, and related the whole story. Ghulam Nabi was a man of quick decisions if circumstances demanded that, and at once agreed to the proposition.

The interview took place at the royal camp. The Amir showed his pleasant side, was kind to the candidate, asked a

few questions, expressed his pleasure at the doctor's fluency in Persian, found him intelligent and adequately respectful, told him his requirements, and approved his appointment. The civil surgeon and the entire British bureaucracy assembled in Peshawar and Rawalpindi heaved a sigh of relief. The Viceroy was informed that all was well. Ghulam Nabi was ordered to attend the Amir on a 24-hour roster duty, and to report for work within an hour. He came home, and while collecting and packing his things, explained briefly to Zuhra and Nur what had happened and where he was going. He was in too great a hurry to notice their reaction. He said goodbye to them, kissed the children, and was on his way to the royal presence.

For the next 19 days Ghulam Nabi lived with the King. One advantage of being the personal physician of a ruler is that it makes the royal personage more accessible to the doctor than to anyone else however exalted his rank. The prime minister, cabinet ministers and generals don't live with the ruler. When they are summoned they come one by one or in a group and then depart once the official business is over. The relationship with the physician is not only one of day-and-night, but also close and personal. This gave Ghulam Nabi a unique vantage point.

On 31 March the royal party travelled to Rawalpindi by the special train provided by the Indian government. There followed a week of serious and delicate negotiations. It was during these parleys that the Amir declined politely and firmly the offer of the Viceroy, the Marquis of Dufferin and Ava, to send British troops and engineers to defend Afghanistan's northern and north-eastern frontiers. He had no intention of allowing his country, of which he had just begun to pick up pieces and put them together again, to be turned into a plane where Britain and Russia fought out their battles for supremacy. On the contrary, he wanted a commitment from the British, to be given in public and in

plain and clear words, that they would protect and defend the integrity of Afghanistan and provide the Afghans with whatever funds and arms were necessary to enable them to repel a Russian invasion, on the specific condition that the British did not intervene or jump into the fray on any pretext. The Viceroy gave his private assurances in a language which could not be misunderstood. On the eve of the Panjdeh crisis the canny Amir made public the Viceroy's assurances, thus committing the British government to the position the Afghans wanted. Abdur Rahman had attained the object of his visit.

On 6 April the Viceroy gave a banquet for the Amir which Ghulam Nabi attended. On the 8th. a Viceregal durbar was held in the Amir's honour where Abdur Rahman presented Ghulam Nabi to Dufferin, complimented the Indian doctor on his competence, and cited his services as an example of Anglo-Afghan co-operation and goodwill. The Viceroy shook hands with Ghulam Nabi, and looking straight into his eyes said in a low tone, "Thank you for upholding our honour".

The official ceremonies were over, but the Amir stayed on for another ten days for the purpose of studying how the British ruled and ran India so peacefully and efficiently (as he confided to Ghulam Nabi). On his departure on 18 April the King expressed his grateful thanks to Ghulam Nabi for looking after him, invited him to Kabul whenever he could manage some leave, and presented him with a robe of honour. When he wanted to pay the doctor for his services, Ghulam Nabi refused most respectfully the generous amount named on the ground that he was a government servant and his status did not allow him to receive any monetary reward. The Amir did not insist. The two men parted in mutual goodwill.

This brief encounter was to change the life of Ghulam Nabi and the fortunes of the family. But that was still 20 years away. The immediate results of the interlude were a

lot of excitement at home and Ghulam Nabi's resignation from the service.

First the excitement. Some attitudes and feelings are determined by the age in which we live. Till the 1920s there were reports of Indians' refusal to put their right hand in water for several weeks after having it shaken by the Viceroy out of fear lest the feel and grace of the imperial touch might be washed off. In the nineteenth century the awe of the British dominion was almost palpable, something that the present generation cannot even imagine. Till 1947 a British deputy commissioner was a god of considerable divinity for the people of the district. I am talking about the Viceroy, the highest of the highest in the land. And that was not all. Ghulam Nabi had also met a living king, lived with him, and won his favours. He did not refuse to wash his right hand, but he felt that life was worth living.

Ghulam Nabi had a good background, he had a respectable private income, he had learnt English as a child from Englishmen, read medicine as a boy, and mixed with his European teachers, even shaken hands with the lieutenant governor of the Punjab on receiving his degree. But still he was an Indian, a subject of the Empire, and a 33-year old junior civil servant of a provincial government. The glory of meeting a king and a viceroy within one week was not to be underestimated or forgotten even by a man of his contentment and innate pride. He was highly pleased.

The children were too young to realize the good fortune that had befallen their father, but the women knew the size of the fortune and wallowed in it. Like all mothers, Zuhra had always prized his son high and was now happy to see her opinion confirmed by events. Her thoughts went back to Waziruddin who had invested so much in Ghulam Nabi's upbringing and education and had died before the fruit of his foresight could be picked. She missed her husband the more, but she was also more proud of her son.

Nur partook equally of Zuhra's pride and Ghulam Nabi's pleasure. To the wife's natural gladness at her husband's worldly success she added her private satisfaction on the vindication of her high opinion of him.

Religion and recent history added another dimension to the gaiety in the house. To the Muslims of India, especially of the north, Afghanistan was nearer than Iran, more accessible, more contiguous in the sense that there were no vast and wild tracts of land separating the two countries, as there were between India and Iran. Almost exactly 900 years ago Mahmud of Ghazna had included Peshawar and Lahore in his Indian empire, and since then in one way or another Afghanistan's history had been linked with India's. The two recent Afghan wars had kept the country in the forefront of Indian Muslim attention and sympathy. In all educated and well-informed families, as Ghulam Nabi's, Afghan affairs were talked about and the British humiliation in the last brush with the Afghans was a source of pleasure. Zuhra and Nur applauded Afghan successes and prayed for more triumphs.

Ghulam Nabi's was the first generation in north India to receive Western education. This stretched him on a mental rack. As Waziruddin's son, as a trained doctor, as a Punjabi who had been released from the vagaries and cruelties of Sikh rule by the British, as a product of modern education, he not only approved British rule but considered it as an opportunity provided by providence to learn more and embrace an advanced civilization. He felt no shame or embarrassment in being a part of the imperial administrative machinery in India. Like his father, he discerned many virtues in the Englishman and respected him for them. He was a modern man by deliberate choice. He did not regret what he had decided to be and to do.

But when his modernity clashed with his faith the echoes of the conflict filled his heart and mind. The British in India did not interfere with his practice and belief as a

Muslim. But the sight of a Muslim ruler coming to India to ask the British for something hurt his dignity as a Muslim. This did not divide his loyalty. But it made him uneasy. The feeling did not go beyond that.

The women were curious and plied him with questions and queries. What did Abdur Rahman look like? Did he behave like a king? As if they knew how kings behaved! How did he treat him? Did he smile? Often? Sometimes? Not at all? How did he dress? Was he a healthy man? Why did he need a doctor all the time? Did he talk too much? What did he eat and drink? Did he inquire about his family and children? The questions never stopped.

Then the women turned to the Viceroy. The poor Dufferin was dissected in absentia by merciless feminine inquisitiveness. Some questions were phrased as if Lord Dufferin was on the staff of the Peshawar civil hospital. Others as if he was a god who was bowed to but never seen.

The joint assault by mother and wife was unforgiving. It broke through the defences of Ghulam Nabi's reticence. He found that he himself wanted to talk about the two personages he had met unexpectedly. He supplied all details. He gave vent to his private feelings and misgivings. He praised the good manners of the Amir and the courtesy of the Viceroy. He drew a picture of the banquet and the durbar. The women listened to him spellbound because he talked of a world which they would never see and of comings and goings which they could only visualize with some effort of imagination. For days their interrogation and his explanations fascinated the three adults, with Ghulam Muhammad's wife as a partly confused and partly interested audience. During these sessions everyone referred to the fact that the birth of Abdul Aziz had heralded this happy course of events. The baby boy was hugged and kissed and blessed as if he had personally arranged the Anglo-Afghan Conference and the illness of the Amir's own physician.

CLASH WITH THE BRITISH: 1885

Then disaster struck this small world of reminiscences and stimulating gossip. Since resuming his duties at the hospital Ghulam Nabi had noticed a coolness in the civil surgeon's behaviour towards him. He felt it but ignored it. Then the Englishman began to make remarks and comments within Ghulam Nabi's hearing which were meant to provoke him. He was a patient man and still refused to answer back. Misreading his silence as cowardice, the civil surgeon then addressed his comments directly to his subordinate. What he said and repeated several times during a couple of months amounted to this: You were very happy to serve the Afghan ruler. It gave you much pleasure. You went out of your way to ensure his comfort. There was hardly any need to be so polite. These Afghans are a primitive race, uncouth and far removed from any culture. They should not be allowed to think too much of themselves. You are an employee of the British, and you should have let the Amir know their opinion of Afghanistan.

Here was a challenge that Ghulam Nabi could not let pass. In deferential words he reminded the civil surgeon how fanatically the hospital had searched for a doctor qualified to attend on Abdur Rahman Khan, how the Englishman himself had partly ordered and partly begged him to act as the Amir's personal physician, how the Amir had expressed to the Viceroy his pleasure on the quality of his services, and how the Viceroy had thanked him in the open durbar. At the end of this recital of facts Ghulam Nabi, still courteous but now also stern, asked the civil surgeon not to be nasty and, if he felt that he (Ghulam Nabi) had done something wrong, to report on the matter to the government.

It may be that the civil surgeon was not all there in his upper storey, or that he had wanted the job of looking after the Amir for himself, or that he was jealous of Ghulam

Nabi's having made a good impression on the Amir, of his attendance at the banquet and the durbar, where officials much senior in rank to the civil surgeon were nowhere to be seen, and of the Viceroy's word of thanks to the native upstart. Whatever the cause of his hostility, he made it the more difficult to understand by acting on Ghulam Nabi's suggestion, made for other reasons, of reporting him to the higher authorities. An official 4-page letter went from the civil surgeon of Peshawar to the head of the provincial medical department and, as the matter related directly to the official visit of the ruler of Afghanistan, from there to the Lieutenant Governor, who thought it wise to send a copy to the Foreign Secretary to the Government of India. The Foreign Secretary, understandably very sensitive to anything to do with Afghanistan, ordered that Ghulam Nabi should be sent a copy of the civil surgeon's letter and his detailed comments obtained.

The matter had gone much higher than the civil surgeon could have imagined or Ghulam Nabi had thought possible. On reading the report Ghulam Nabi discovered that it was based on hearsay and contained many innuendoes. Words were attributed to him and to the Amir which had not been uttered. There must have been Indian intelligence agents in the royal camp in Rawalpindi who spied on the Amir and his entourage and sent their reports to the government. But no third person was allowed to be present when the Amir was with his personal physician, and yet the civil surgeon had fabricated their conversation and peppered it with imaginary utterances by Ghulam Nabi.

Enraged by this brazen-faced distortion, he wrote a 10-page reply, telling the whole story from the Amir's request for a Persian-speaking Muslim doctor and the civil surgeon's orders to Ghulam Nabi to serve the Amir without delay to the Viceroy's words of thanks to Ghulam Nabi for coming to the rescue of the government and creating such a good

impression on the royal visitor. He also informed the government of certain facts withheld by the civil surgeon, like the Amir's invitation to him to visit Afghanistan, and the minister-in-waiting's official communication to the civil surgeon thanking him for arranging the services of an excellent doctor who had pleasantly surprised the Amir with his ability and courtly manners. The civil surgeon had been too indiscreet in referring in his report to Ghulam Nabi as a "native upstart". In commenting on the use of this abusive epithet in an official letter Ghulam Nabi gave a brief account of his family's background.

The reply, traversing all the normal official channels, ultimately landed at the Foreign Secretary's desk. Along the way it had attracted remarks and notes by the officers who had received it and then pushed it up. The Foreign Secretary wrote to the Lieutenant Governor, bemoaning the civil surgeon's conduct which was unbecoming of an Englishman, supporting the Indian doctor's complaint that he had been wronged, and ordering that the civil surgeon should be reprimanded and asked to apologize verbally to Ghulam Nabi.

By now Ghulam Nabi had served the government for over a decade, and he knew that this case could only result either in his dismissal for being rude to his British superior and other faults attributed to him or in adverse remarks in his service file along with his transfer to a less attractive station. He had prepared two letters in anticipation of either contingency. Both were ripostes which the imperial bureaucracy would understand clearly and, he hoped, remember for some time.

When the official decision reached Peshawar it created a sensation in the hospital. The civil surgeon was stunned and refused to see the words which covered the paper. He realized his foolhardiness on discovering that the matter had gone to Calcutta and the order had been issued by the Lieutenant Governor himself. Only two courses were open to him: to obey the orders or hand in his papers. He chose

the lesser humiliation, apologized to Ghulam Nabi for all that he had done and written "under a misunderstanding", and hoped that from now onwards he and the Indian doctor would work together and be on good terms. Let bygones be bygones, he said. He did not know his Indian doctor.

Ghulam Nabi was greatly surprised. His faith in the wisdom of his father was redoubled. Waziruddin had told him more than once that the British might be overbearing and arrogant and too demanding for Indian taste, and occasionally might treat a native badly, but by and large they were men of justice. The edifice of British imperialism in India, he used to stay, rested on two pillars: justice and knowledge. His son's first brush with the establishment bore out this insight.

Ghulam Nabi tore up the two letters he had prepared. He wrote a new one and addressed it to Sir Charles Aitchison, the Lieutenant Governor. Without losing his temper or showing the least disrespect, but in telling and concise phrases, he told the head of the province a little about Waziruddin and his corroding anxiety to make his sons fit to serve the new India, his modern ideas and their impact on the family, his implicit faith in British justice, and his legacy which was so dear to his son. He thanked the lieutenant governor for doing justice and for forcing a member of his race to apologize to him. But, he pointed out with unmistakable emphasis, it was not possible for him to remain in the service after this humiliation. The wrong had been righted. He was happy and grateful for that. The wrong had also left a scar. He could not forget it. He concluded by reminding Sir Charles Aitchison that one thing his modern education and his contacts with British teachers and colleagues and superiors had taught him was that self-respect came first and every other consideration second. He was unable to betray the lesson he had learnt. He added that he was a man of private means and had only joined the service for the sake of putting his professional skill at the disposal of the government. He could and would live happily,

and certainly in company with his conscience, in retirement or private practice. He would be grateful if his resignation from the service was accepted in effect from the earliest date convenient to the government.

The letter could have but one result. The Lieutenant Governor accepted the resignation with the formal regrets and the equally formal thanks for the services rendered which were a part of the required formula. Ghulam Nabi was to discover later that the gubernatorial regret was more than a routine formality.

Zuhra and Nur did not know anything about these developments. Ghulam Nabi had thought that any reference to his difficulties with the civil surgeon and his decision to leave the service would worry the women. He also feared that they might put pressure on him in the initial stages to let pass the civil surgeon's nasty remarks and in the later to desist from the drastic step of resigning. Now that he told them of what he had done he was taken aback by their reaction. To his surprise and even greater pleasure both congratulated him on adopting the only self-respecting course. It was a relief to know that his public action would not disturb his private life.

By now it was summer. Three servants were summoned from Batala to help the Peshawar domestics in the final packing up. The few pieces of official furniture were returned to the hospital. The rest was packed and crated. Goodbyes were said, and the family returned to Batala. On the way in the train Ghulam Nabi told Zuhra and Nur that he had made up his mind not to seek or accept the employment of the British government. When Nur asked him if he hated the farangis, he said in the firmest of tones that the recent unpleasant crisis had neither affected nor diminished his admiration for the British, but admiration was one thing and serving under a white official was another.

One chapter in Ghulam Nabi's life ended in the summer of 1885.

INTERMISSION IN BATALA

For the next two years Batala was the centre of the Kahnuwan émigrés. A portion of the haveli was extensively re-conditioned, converting several small and dark *kothris* into large, airy and bright rooms. Some small rooms were made into bathrooms. One large room had its roof redone.

Ghulam Nabi did not set up a proper and regular medical practice, but opened a sort of a clinic in one part of the house which opened on to the bazaar and employed a compounder to make up his prescriptions. He saw the patients in the morning between breakfast and the midday meal. He slept in the afternoon for two hours in the hot months; in milder weather he read Persian literature, and refreshed his knowledge of medicine, studied Islam, pored over the few books he could get on Western civilization, and read the newspapers. Late afternoons and evenings were spent on long walks outside the town walls, coaching the girls in their elementary studies, and conversing with the family. The evening meal was an evening meal and not a late dinner, eaten immediately after sunset in winters and a little later in summers. He spent another couple of hours with his books before going to bed. All his life he was an early retirer so that he could rise in the small hours of the night to pray. Ghulam Muhammad came to Batala during the long and short holidays, and Ghulam Nabi spent a lot of time with him in improving his medical knowledge and teaching him how to live in this world. He was bringing him up in his own image just as Waziruddin had, in the insufficient time at his disposal, tried to mould Ghulam Nabi in his own cast.

What did Ghulam Nabi read? He kept himself well informed by subscribing to several Persian, Urdu and English newspapers. During the last 20 years a number of Urdu-Persian papers had begun to appear from Lahore, Amritsar, Gujranwala and Sialkot. He also received the *Pioneer* from

Allahabad and the *Punjab Opinion* from Lahore. Apart from medicine, he had two major literary interests. He was enamoured of classical Persian poetry, written both in Iran and India. He began to acquire the diwans of all the better-known poets, to which he later added a few finely-calligraphed manuscripts. He was the founder of our first family library. His second interest lay in finding out the reasons for the power and prosperity of the Western nations, particularly of Great Britain. Very few books were available. There were no libraries or bookshops. His initial reading was mainly Christian missionary oriented. A Church Missionary society had been established in Lahore in 1852, and a Punjab Tract Society opened in 1863. He wrote to both of them, telling them of his requirements. The former sent him what was pure and unashamed missionary propaganda leaflets and a Bible in Urdu. But the latter (which later developed into the first proper bookshop in the Punjab under the title of the Punjab Religious Book Society and was situated in Anarkali) was more understanding. Ghulam Nabi went to Lahore to see its director and was promised some books on European history and literature. When these arrived he devoured them like a student. He was deeply religious, but did not much depend on the traditional treatments of exegesis or other conventional commentaries. He knew some Arabic, and now that he had time to spare he improved his knowledge of it to the point where he could read and study the Quran without the help of any interlinear translation, though he did consult the gloss in the margins.

It was at this time that he began to compose Persian verses. He had tried his hand at the ghazal in Peshawar but had had neither enough time nor peace of mind to persist. Now in Batala he returned to the exercise, inspired and emboldened by his deeper study of classical poetry. He had no teacher or guide, and remained a poet's poet in the sense that his only mentors were the revered masters of the craft

whose collections he read and reread. He did not adopt any *nom de plume*, but sometimes very occasionally he put his name in the last couplet.

Both Zuhra and Nur were literate in Persian and Punjabi. Both had a good musical voice. For years they had been declaiming snatches of classical Punjabi poetry for each other's pleasure. When Ghulam Nabi came to know of this gift in his mother and wife he insisted on becoming their audience. When he began to compose Persian poetry he made it a habit to ask one or both of them to sing the fresh ghazal for him. These poetical recitations became a routine, and my father used to tell me how often he had heard his mother and grandmother singing for the pleasure of his father. This was the beginning, albeit unconscious, of my father's interest in Persian and Punjabi poetry which in time matured into his obsession with Sayyid Waris Shah's *Hir*.

The house was filling up. There were permanent residents, some temporary inmates, some frequent large groups of guests and visitors. Zuhra was there, still the head of the family in a world of men. Ghulam Nabi and Nur had another daughter, Umrao, at 11 P.M. on the new year day of 1886, thus making a round half a dozen of daughters, now ranging from about 13 years to a few days. Abdul Aziz was 2 years old. Ghulam Muhammad's wife lived with the family, and her husband joined her in all spells of holidays. Sharfo and her two sons added another small family to the clan. Early in 1886 news came from Dodhi that a daughter was born to Ghulam Qadir on 2 February, who was named Zainab. She was my mother.

Sharfo was creating problems. For some time Zuhra and Nur had lived in Batala and found Sharfo a trial. Now that all of them were living together, Sharfo made her presence a bit of a burden on everyone. She spared none. She was prim and stiff in manner with Zuhra; but on occasions when her temper was on the rise she did not baulk at telling a few

things to the mother-in-law. She was a little afraid of Ghulam Nabi, but not respectful. It was the poor Nur who bore the brunt of her elder sister's frustrations and natural vileness. Was she jealous of Nur for having a loving husband, a lot of money, a mother in her mother-in-law, and the affection and loyalty of the whole family? As often happens in such cases, she might have resented her dependence on Ghulam Nabi and Nur and answered their generosity and welcome with rude behaviour, family intrigues and ill temper. Nur was an easy prey. She was Sharfo's younger sister and also her patron and her purse. She was also forgiving by nature. Finding her more vulnerable than others, Sharfo vented her spleen on her. At first Nur had felt insulted, cried out her heart in private, and complained to Ghulam Nabi and Zuhra. But that was the time that was. Now Nur took no notice of Sharfo's treatment of her; in fact, took no notice of her at all. In a crisis she laughed off her rudeness with a shrug. She did not let her presence or doings affect the even tenor of her life or the repose and tranquillity that were her world.

Sharfo's sons were now school-goers. The elder, Muhammad Husain, was now 15 and the younger, Akbar Husain, was 6. Ghulam Nabi was looking after them, choosing their school, arranging tutors for them, sometimes coaching them himself. He was much pained to see that they were growing in their mother's image. They were trained to hate their father, Azizuddin, who had abandoned them; that was natural, though a wise mother should have avoided it. Worse still, they were not told by Sharfo to show any respect or gratitude to the people who had saved them from shelterless penury. They dared not misbehave in the presence of Ghulam Nabi, so overpowering was his personality. But they did not treat Zuhra as a grandmother should be treated. They were nasty to Nur from whom they received their pocket money and in whose house they were

living. Nur returned their evil with good, and finding the exchange unfruitful prayed for them.

Zuhra was yearning to see Zainab, and on her suggestion Ghulam Qadir and Piranditti came to Batala in the summer of 1886, and the mother and daughter stayed on for a few months but Ghulam Qadir left for Dodhi after a fortnight.

Since leaving Kahnuwan and buying the Batala residence Ghulam Nabi had been away in Amritsar, Banda and Peshawar. This was the first time that he was living in Batala in his own house. He was a hospitable man and found that the more the people at his dinner table the greater his appetite and pleasure. Some remote relatives had not seen him since Waziruddin's death. Now they came to visit him. He invited others to come and see the Batala life. A few arrived unbidden, but keen to meet the clan. Another group of visitors consisted of the family's old retainers and other people from Kahnuwan, who missed the family and wanted to revive traditional connections. They were made welcome and accommodated in the two smaller havelis.

For most of the two years that Ghulam Nabi was in Batala the house was rarely without a dozen or more guests. Zuhra looked forward to these gatherings. She liked to be among a family crowd, and inevitably became its centre. She heard all reports from far and near, inquired about people who were not mentioned, asked why such-and-such a girl was still unmarried and recommended so-and-so as a suitable boy, showed solicitude for the absent and the sick, talked of times gone by and the men and women who were no more, lent her ear as much to the variety of complaints and grouses and words of sorrow and disappointment and of sad deaths and long illnesses and ailments, as to the reports of new births and auspicious betrothals and successful marriages and growing incomes.

Nur moved in her own younger circle. She was all smiles, and laughter just waited to be summoned. She

gossiped and heard tales – tales of cousinly love hoping to bloom into weddings, of bad-tempered husbands and tolerant wives, of scandals which made life beyond the Beas interesting, of neighbours and friends who added variety to life, of children growing too speedily for comfort or arriving too fast for health. In exchange she told them of her own experiences, her life in Peshawar, the affection Zuhra gave her unasked, of Ghulam Nabi's independence of mind, of her brood of daughters, of her only son who rarely left her alone and was fiercely jealous of the little Umrao who needed and received more attention.

Men talked of similar things or slightly different ones in other parts of the house. Sometimes they joined the women in the hall, and then it was like a fair. Words and laughter issued from all corners of the room, filling the air with pleasing echoes. Everyone felt good to be there. Some men went out to buy what their own towns could not provide. Food was ample and delicious and of a refreshing variety. Nur enjoyed feeding her guests well, and there was a battalion of servants at her beck and call.

Soon these reunions became a habit and with time a tradition which lasted until Batala itself was taken away from the family (even then one or two branches or descendants continued the practice of this hospitality in Peshawar and Lahore). Zuhra was used to having many guests in *Kahnuwan* because Waziruddin was popular in the clan and the clan lived within a day's one-way journey. Nur had learnt much from Zuhra, including the art of making people feel at home and entertaining them lavishly. Ghulam Nabi's reticence was due more to a kind of shyness and an unnaturally precocious maturity than to lack of warmth. Within the close family circle and among his own age-group he shed his seriousness as if it were a burden, and laughter came easy to one whose conscious life and responsibilities had begun almost at the same time. He liked to have people around him, enough of them to fill the

house with voices and sounds, and many children and young boys and girls to make the house come alive. Such merriment and revelry in large gatherings helped him to forget the loneliness and suffering of his early years. He did not tell this to anyone, but Zuhra remembered his Batala school-days and recognized the spectre he was trying to put behind him. Nur knew the unhappy story and was privy to the secret of his desire to call the clan to periodic assemblies. He was also the male head of the family, and as such the natural host.

After him his older son continued this tradition in Batala as long as the haveli and his money lasted; so did his younger brother elsewhere as long as he lived. Attending and enjoying these family meetings since his boyhood, Ghulam Muhammad too imbibed their spirit and realized the joy of getting together and the uses of keeping in touch. Two of his sons' (Hakim Jan and Ghulam Ahmad Gul) patrimony included the habit, and they indulged in it in Lahore until their passing away. After them the new Pakistani society changed everything and life became an existence without any values or the human touch.

Ghulam Nabi's medical practice was hardly more than a hobby. His consultations and medicines were free for most of the patients. He only wanted to keep his hand in and some of his time occupied. But he carried with him a half-hidden feeling of guilt. His training in hard work was not compatible with this life of ease. And, though there was enough money to go round and to spare and considerable landed property to fall back upon, he did not like the idea of living off the affluence of his forefathers. Above all he hated indolence. He could forgive himself for living well on his inheritance if he were doing something substantial and useful. The routine of seeing a few patients, reading a few books, and entertaining batches of relatives was galling.

Nature, in its wisdom, has made women more sensible of the consequences and implications, however far-reaching, of

lack of regular earning for the household. Both Zuhra and Nur neither wanted money nor needed it. But they did not like to see Ghulam Nabi sitting idle at home. They preferred a working man. For several years they had seen him living a round-the-clock working day, and saw nothing commendable in his present state of worklessness. Lethargy in anyone, more so in a man, was no virtue, and could father many evils.

Zuhra was the formal head and in all important matters and affairs her decision, which was invited, was final. But the day-to-day running of the house was in Nur's hands. She received the income, she apportioned and distributed the bounties and pensions and allowances, and she made and administered the domestic budget. It was her principal duty to ensure that expenses did not outrun receipts. There was no possibility of that. But a housewife looks far, very far, into the womb of time. Nur's feminine sense of domesticity made her broach the subject with her husband.

The couple's mutual love and understanding encouraged Nur to be frank and forthright. She did not mince words in telling Ghulam Nabi that he must find a job because that was a man's natural métier. He should not lean on his background for so long that he forgot how to stand erect. Inherited wealth was a nice thing, and ensured a certain standard of life, and gave a comfortable feeling. But it was his duty to add to it, to do what his father and forefathers had done, and to earn money and not just spend it. She reminded him that he was the head of the family with greater responsibilities than most people in his position. She mentioned Ghulam Muhammad and his wife, Sharfo and her sons. her own six daughters and one son and probably more to arrive, the pensioners in Kahnuwan, the scores of servants in Batala, and the less-endowed members of the Mukerian and Kaithan branches who were sent small monetary allowances. She made the list of outgoings as comprehensive as she could, and then asked him if it was right for him to idle away his time.

When Ghulam Nabi responded with hums and haws and his resolve not to enter British government service, she reminded him of what he himself had told her in Peshawar. Had not Amir Abdur Rahman Khan, the king of Afghanistan, invited him to Kabul? Why didn't he go to Kabul and see if an opening was available there? Speaking like a woman beyond her age, she reminded him of the bad habit of opportunities to fluctuate. A wise man takes a chance by its forelock and doesn't let go.

In the face of this torrent of words, beneath which lay the steel of reprimand, Ghulam Nabi could not but promise to look around. One possibility he rejected at once and with a finality which brooked no reconsideration. He was not going to Kabul and he was not going to write to the King for a job. His self-respect did not allow either course.

During the next several months such exchanges took place intermittently. Nur's persistence was pitted against Ghulam Nabi's self-esteem. The outcome was unpredictable. The debate seemed endless. And there the matter might have rested to Nur's chagrin and Ghulam Nabi's impatience, but for a chance occurrence which enabled both to walk hand in hand into the sunlight of a benign fortune with Nur's sang froid restored in full and Ghulam Nabi's self-respect intact.

THE BRITISH INTERVENE

Sir Charles Aitchison, the Lieutenant Governor of the Punjab, had been intrigued by Ghulam Nabi's resignation. In his long administrative career in India this was his first experience of an Indian who insisted on abandoning his living in spite of and after having been given a clean bill of official health. He admired the assistant surgeon's courage and wanted to know more about him. The provincial government was asked to make private inquiries about the man and his

background. When the dossier was complete and was put before him he read it with interest and was impressed. The imperial curiosity was aroused. (One of the secrets of the success of British rule in India was this deep inquisitiveness and unending interest in what made the Indians tick). At a time when so few Indian doctors were around and Indians were pushing each other to the ground to get into state employment, why had this assistant surgeon of 12 years' service thrown away his career as if it meant nothing? His teachers at the Punjab Medical School spoke highly of him. His departmental reports were good. He was able, conscientious, honest and diligent. Then, why, for heaven's sake, had he resigned? To teach the British civil surgeon a lesson in probity? Or, was he a little soft in the head? Aitchison decided to meet the man when this could be arranged.

Such an opportunity arose towards the end of 1886. On 3 November the Viceroy was coming to Lahore to lay the foundation stone of the Chiefs' College, a new institution of the English public school type where the sons of native chiefs and aristocratic families would be exposed at an early age to modern education, the English language, the manners and morals of the British race, and the might and pomp of the Empire. Aitchison ordered that Dr. Ghulam Nabi, now residing in Batala, should be sent an invitation card for the ceremony. The official reason for his inclusion in a most exclusive list of invitees was that he had met the Viceroy in Rawalpindi and been of timely help to the government by serving the Amir of Afghanistan.

In those days, as for many many years to follow, an invitation from the Viceroy or the provincial Governor was not, as the card formally proclaimed, a pleasure for the host but, as everyone understood, a command from on high. Leading landholders, graybeards who were heads of rich shrines and other venerable and influential bigwigs who were demigods to the people living around them deemed it the

highest of honours to be present at the durbar of their district officer. This was an invitation from the Lieutenant Governor, the Lat sahib, to attend a ceremony which the Viceroy, the Lat of all the Lats, would grace with his presence. The invitation came unexpectedly and without Ghulam Nabi's trying for it. Refusal or regret or diplomatic illness was out of the question. Ghulam Nabi had seen the magnificence of the viceregal camp in Rawalpindi staged to impress the visiting royalty. He now wanted to see a repeat performance on home ground. The family felt as pleased as if he had received a title.

Ghulam Nabi went to Lahore and, having no relatives in the city, was obliged to stay at the Faletti's Hotel. This comfortable, elegant and almost new hotel (opened in 1880) was not too far from the Government House and the site chosen for the Chiefs' College. He attended the official ceremony, and, wonder of wonders, was also invited to the luncheon hosted by the Lieutenant Governor in honour of the Viceroy. On both occasions, the luncheon and the laying of the foundation stone, Aitchison talked to Ghulam Nabi for a few minutes. While they were talking after the luncheon the Viceroy strolled over to them and Aitchison introduced Ghulam Nabi to His Excellency, reminding him that he was the doctor who had been attached to Amir Abdur Rahman of Afghanistan in Peshawar and Rawalpindi the previous year. Dufferin had a good memory and remembered the flurry caused by the Amir's peremptory desire to have an Indian physician to replace the one he had lost in transit. He said to Aitchison, "Oh! I remember him well." Then he turned to Ghulam Nabi and said, "Doctor, I am grateful to you for what you did for us. You kept our flag flying at a time when the Amir's goodwill meant so much to us. These Afghans may be primitive characters but they are very sensitive. I am glad you handled the situation deftly. We owe you our thanks." And then he was gone. The luncheon party was over. Ghulam Nabi paid his respects to the Lieutenant Governor and returned to his hotel.

But the story does not end here. In the evening an ADC of the Lieutenant Governor called at Ghulam Nabi at the hotel and told him that Aitchison wished to see him at 10 A.M. the next morning. Transport would be arranged and he should be ready at 9.30. Ghulam Nabi did not know how to interpret this order. Why did the Lieutenant Governor want to see him so soon after today's meeting? Had he done something wrong? Had he failed to be appropriately respectful to the Viceroy? Had he said something that he should not have said? Even if it was so, was his misconduct of such a serious nature that the Lieutenant Governor himself should call him into his presence to issue a verbal reprimand? He racked his brain but could find no satisfactory explanation for the summons.

The meeting with the Lieutenant Governor next morning was eventful both for what was said and for its implications. At the outset Aitchison asked him the real reason for his resigning the service after having been cleared by the government of any failing or fault and after receiving an apology from his British superior. The reply Ghulam Nabi gave remained so fresh in his memory that 18 years after the event, on the eve of his older son's departure for England in 1904, he could recall almost the exact words as a parting advice to Abdul Aziz.

"Your Honour", Ghulam Nabi said, "my action was meant neither to impress you with my integrity nor to demonstrate that an Indian too can dare leave your service, but to show to the government that I too, a mere Indian, could be self-respecting enough to sacrifice my living for the sake of my honour. When I found that my superior officer, who was British, could manufacture facts and cast false slurs on me, I knew that he was not fit to be my master. Please try to understand me. I believe that British education had taught me the supreme role of self-respect in life. When I found that quality slipping away from my grasp, I sent in my papers."

Aitchison asked, "Does it mean that you are determined not to serve the British Indian government in future in any capacity?"

Ghulam Nabi decided to be frank. "Yes, Your Honour. But please give me a chance to furnish a fuller explanation of my point of view. I am not disloyal to the government. Nor do I hate British rule over India. I have a respectable private income. I did not need a job. I joined the service in order to put my professional training and knowledge to practical use. My father was anxious that I should receive modern English education and take full advantage of the opportunities offered by the annexation of the Punjab by the British. I am sure what I did at Peshawar was right. I had a choice between staying in the service or insisting on my self-respect. I decided that my honour came before the service. This does not make me a disloyal subject. I have not met Sayyid Ahmad Khan but have read what he has written. I may not agree with everything that he says, but I follow him when he advises the Muslims of India that modern education is the only way open to them to march forward in the present age. One of the principal objects of modern education is to build the character of the people. Character means the ability to walk erect, to think for oneself, to live with one's conscience, to criticize and let be criticized. The British themselves want the Indians to be trained in self-respect. What else does character-building mean? Your Honour knows that one of the textbooks prescribed in our schools is John Stuart Mill's essay on liberty. I am the product of an education gained by reading and meditating over this essay. I think you should be pleased to see the result of the system of education your government has devised for us."

Aitchison paused, probably to ponder over what the Indian doctor had said, and then asked one last question: "Dr. Ghulam Nabi, what are you doing now?"

Ghulam Nabi replied, "I pass my time in reading Persian poetry, studying Western civilization, running a free medical practice, and in playing with my children."

Nothing more was said. Ghulam Nabi returned to Batala, once again to tell his family the tale of the size and grandeur of the Lahore ceremonies. Nur, who could be quite intimate and mischievous at times, said to her husband, "You are now used to the company of kings, viceroys and governors. Why should you look at us, the lowly folk?"

Aitchison had not taken all this trouble to be able merely to look at Ghulam Nabi. He wanted to judge the man. Once he had weighed him in his own balance of character-study, he decided to do something to end the doctor's workless days. In view of the Indian's determined declaration that he would not enter the British government service, any appointment or nomination by the lieutenant governor would not help. Aitchison asked the senior administrators in Lahore, especially of the medical and public health departments, to keep their eyes open for any non-official opening which might suit Ghulam Nabi and override his objections and reservations.

Aitchison's term as lieutenant governor was to end on 2 April 1887. A few weeks before his departure he was informed that the Nawab of Bahawalpur, Sadiq Muhammad Khan IV, was asking the Government of the Punjab if it could recommend an Indian, preferably Punjabi, Muslim doctor for the post of personal physician to the Nawab. The appointee would also serve as the Chief Medical Officer of the State. Aitchison himself did not want to offer the appointment to Ghulam Nabi, lest the latter might think that he was receiving a favour from the person to whom he had sent his resignation and therefore decline it. He told the Nawab that the government was searching for a suitable person and as soon as one was found his name and particulars would be forwarded to him. No action was taken

for a few weeks, and Aitchison left the province, asking his successor, Sir James B. Lyall, to get things moving and arrange Ghulam Nabi's appointment in Bahawalpur.

In May (1887), on the orders of the new lieutenant governor, a letter was sent to Ghulam Nabi, telling him of the request of Bahawalpur to the Government of the Punjab and of the government's desire to recommend him for the post, and inquiring if he would be prepared to go there after the Nawab's approval had been received.

Ghulam Nabi was pleased to hear from the government. He wanted to be back in active life in his profession. Nur was already pressing him to get into service somewhere, and Zuhra was backing Nur. He had a large family and several dependants and many responsibilities. A supplement to his income would not come amiss. But the paramount reason for his willingness to go to Bahawalpur was his anxiety to make a career in his profession. There were other attractions. Bahawalpur was a Muslim state. He would be the head of the medical department and thus be his own master. As physician to the Nawab he would have direct personal access to the ruler. There should be no interference in his work, and the Nawab enjoyed a good reputation as a person and as a ruler.

Ghulam Nabi wrote to Lahore that he was ready to work in Bahawalpur if selected by the State. His name was duly sent to Bahawalpur, and the Nawab summoned him for, as he politely put it, a personal meeting. Ghulam Nabi went to Bahawalpur for the interview which lasted for about two hours. A year later the Nawab told him that the interview should have been even shorter and perhaps not arranged at all because he had been recommended warmly and unreservedly by two lieutenant governors (Aitchison and Lyall), one viceroy (Dufferin), the Punjab Medical School, and the civil surgeon of Peshawar. The interview, at which no third person was present, merged into a long social talk in which the Nawab asked him to narrate his life story in detail and without

reservation, as it was a private meeting, and heard with interest what he was told. The Nawab was curious about Ghulam Nabi's impressions of Amir Abdur Rahman. At the end of the meeting he told Ghulam Nabi laughingly, "So far I haven't had a personal physician who has done the same job for a king. I am sure my life and health and that of my family would be safe in your hands." Ghulam Nabi replied that the health of all human beings was in the hands of God, but he would try to prescribe the best available medicine and pray to God for its efficacy. The Nawab said, "You were born to be a courtier. In time, I hope, we will also be friends." The conversation ended on this exhilarating note.

Ghulam Nabi stayed in Bahawalpur for another two days. He toured the city and visited Ahmadpur Sharqiya where the Nawab had his permanent and principal residence at Dera Nawab Sahib. He went to the Nawab's personal office to find out about the exact terms and conditions of his appointment, and to the medical department to survey its working and organization.

On his return to Batala he gave the good news to the family of his selection for the appointment and told them what he had been able to gather about life in Bahawalpur. Everyone was happy. Umrao and Abdul Aziz were too young to know what was being planned, but the five daughters were excited at the move. Sharfo was asked whether she wanted to come with the family to Bahawalpur or stay back. She chose to live in Batala, where she would be the mistress of the house. But Ghulam Nabi told her that he was not satisfied with the upbringing of her two sons, that he would let Muhammad Husain stay with her and attend school as she might need him, but Akbar Husain must go with him to be under his personal supervision and control. She did not object to the arrangement. A few servants would be left behind to look after her comforts and the house. Supply from the farm in Anarkali would reach her regularly, and so would her monthly

allowance from Bahawalpur. Goodbyes were said and the family was ready for the journey. This was the summer of 1887, just about two years since its last move from Peshawar.

The State had made special travel arrangements. One bogey of six first class compartments and one of two third class compartments were attached to the normal Batala-Lahore train: the first for family accommodation, the second for the luggage and the servants. The bogies were detached from the main train at Amritsar, and again at Lahore and latched on to the trains going from Amritsar to Lahore and from Lahore to Karachi. The train service was almost brand new. The Lahore-Karachi track had been put into service in 1880, and the Batala-Amritsar service opened to traffic in 1883. But there was no air conditioning; it came much later in the mid-1930s. As it was summer, large blocks of ice were placed in all the compartments of the family bogey, and the supply was replenished at Amritsar, Lahore, Montgomery and Multan. The railway caterers at the Lahore railway station supplied all the meals en route.

The destination was not Bahawalpur city, the capital and administrative centre of the State, but Ahmadpur Sharqiya, a small town beyond Bahawalpur city but on the main railway line, where the ruler had his principal palace called Dera Nawab Sahib. None of the main trains running between Lahore and Karachi stopped at Ahmadpur; but for the convenience of the Nawab, who sometimes chose to begin his journey from here rather than Bahawalpur city, a platform and a couple of large rooms had been built here for the exclusive use of the ruling family and its guests. Every mail and express train halted here if the Nawab so wished.

Ghulam Nabi and family detrained at Bahawalpur and were taken to Dera Nawab Sahib in roofed victorias. The baggage and the servants followed in tongas and yekkas. The doctor was installed in a bungalow near the palace. A new life had begun for him.

TEN YEARS IN BAHAWALPUR

The Bahawalpur State lay to the south-west of the Punjab and to the north-east of Sind. It was bounded on the north by the river Sutlej, on the west by the river Indus, and on the south by the States of Bikaner and Jaisalmir and the province of Sind. It was about 300 miles long and 50 miles wide.

The founder of the State, Sadiq Muhammad Khan I, who died in 1746, was a Daudpota by race and traced his descent from the Prophet's uncle Abbas; hence the family surname of Abbasi. The title of Nawab was conferred on Sadiq Muhammad Khan by Nadir Shah in 1739, who also granted him a large part of the territory now included in the State; though technically the State had come into existence in 1702 when Mubarak Khan Abbasi I had declared himself ruler.

From Sadiq Muhammad Khan I to Sadiq Muhammad Khan IV (whom Ghulam Nabi served) the line of rulers ran as follows (the dates are of rulership, not necessarily of life's span):

Sadiq Muhammad Khan I	1723-46
Muhammad Bahawal Khan I	1746-49
Mubarak Khan Abbasi II	1749-72
Muhammad Bahawal Khan II	1772-1809
Sadiq Muhammad Khan II	1809-25
Muhammad Bahawal Khan III	1825-52
Sadiq Muhammad Khan III	1842-53
Fatih Khan	1853-58
Muhammad Bahawal Khan IV	1858-66
Sadiq Muhammad Khan IV	1866-99

The last named Nawab's successors were:

Muhammad Bahawal Khan V	1899-1907
Sadiq Muhammad Khan V	1907-66

Sadiq Muhammad Khan VI	1966-88
Salahuddin Abbasi	1988 onwards

Bahawalpur had an area of 15,000 or 17,285 square miles (authorities differ). In territory it was by far the largest native state in the Punjab, the next being Patiala with 5,932 square miles. Its population in 1881 was 573,494, of which 480,247 were Muslims, 91,272 Hindus, 1,678 Sikhs, 254 Jains, 13 Christians, and 3 Parsis. In population, again, it was the second largest state, with Patiala leading the group with 1.5 million.

The climate was hot and dry. It rained in July and August, but annual rainfall rarely exceeded 5 inches. It was very hot from the end of April to the end of June. The winters were cool with mean temperature of 60-65°F. There was meagre industry: mainly silk *lungis* (ornamental turbans), *susis* (silk cloth) and metal cups made in Bahawalpur and Khanpur towns. The average annual revenue during 1887-97 was Rs. 18 lakhs, out of which the royal court and household consumed Rs. 11 lakhs, public works and the army 2 lakhs each, police 1.5 lakh, and revenue administration one lakh. Sadiq Muhammad Khan was a spendthrift and on his death left heavy debts. But soon after him the revenue jumped to Rs. 30 lakhs and the royal expenditure was much reduced.

The Nawab ruled with the assistance of a Council of 11 members, made up by the Mushir-i-'Ala (President of the Council or Prime Minister), foreign minister, revenue minister, finance minister, minister for works, minister for irrigation, minister of the royal household, chief judge, commander-in-chief, private secretary, and general secretary.

The British Political Agent for the Phulkian States and Bahawalpur resided in Patiala.

There was a peculiar arrangement between the State and British India regarding the postal facility. In return for an annual payment of Rs. 6,000 the postal system was run by the

British Indian authorities. Official letters were conveyed free within the State, and the postal department supplied free of charge service stamps to the value of Rs. 1,300 annually for purposes of official correspondence outside the State. This arrangement was in force since 1878.

Considering the time I am talking about, it is of little surprise that social services were of an elementary nature. Literacy in the State was a mere 2 per cent. All the schools were situated in Bahawalpur city: one government high school for boys (opened in 1882), one Church Mission School, and four middle schools.

Prior to 1886, the State issued two kinds of rupees: the Bahawalpuri (worth 12 annas or 75 modern paisa) and the Ahmadpuri (worth 10 annas of the British Indian rupee or about 70 modern paisa). It also coined gold mohurs of Rs. 16 to 52 in value, and nikka paisa (or small paisa), two and a half of which equalled the British quarter anna or paisa or pice. *Kauri* was legal tender, with 12 of them making a *dhéla* (half a paisa), 6 making a *kasira*. Thus 2 *kasiras* made a *dhéla* and 2 *dhélas* a paisa.

Some distance away from Bahawalpur town, in the desert, lay the historic Darawar Fort. It was said that one kind of fort or another had stood there for 5,000 years. The Abbasis had captured it from the Rajputs in 1733. Originally made of mud, the new rulers had reinforced it with bricks. It was the original capital and household of the Nawabs. All coronations took place here, and all rulers and prominent members of the royal family were buried here.

Bahawal Khan I had moved the capital from Darawar to a new town built by him in 1748 and named it Bahawalpur. In 1887 its population was 17,000 which hardly increased at all in the next 10 years. A 4-mile long mud wall ran round it. Three palaces saved it from obscurity, all built by Sadiq Muhammad Khan IV; hence his high royal expenses and his debts.

Nur Mahal or Nur Palace was built in 1872-75 in Basti Maluk Shah in Italian style. Made of red brick, with a light blue-coloured dome rising high above the surroundings, it was situated in the centre of a 96-acre garden. It cost Rs. 12 lakhs, and was mainly used as the State guest house. When King Edward VII visited India as Prince of Wales he stayed here.

At about the same time the Gulzar Mahal was built as the living quarters for the royal ladies. The largest of all was the Sadiqgarh Palace, built in 1882-85 at a cost of Rs. 20 lakhs. It was a vast square pile, with towers at each corner. The reception hall in the centre was 60 feet long and 56 high, the vestibule being 120 feet high. It contained a number of underground apartments, where the temperature remained at about 70° F, while it rose to 100-110° F in the upper rooms.

When the capital was moved from Darawar to Bahawalpur, Bahawal Khan III (1772-1809) decided to build a palace for himself near Ahmadpur Sharqiya. This was Dera Nawab Sahib. His old residence, though royal in size, did not meet Sadiq Muhammad Abbasi's standard, and in 1882-83 he pulled it down and replaced it with a huge palace set in the middle of a park of several hundred acres. The main gateway opened into a straight road over a furlong in length which led to the palace. Behind and on two wings of the palace were arranged a large number of ancillary buildings. It lay three miles south of the town of Ahmadpur Sharqiya.

Ahmadpur Sharqiya (or Eastern Ahmadpur), which lay twenty miles south-west of Bahawalpur town, was founded in 1748 by a Daudpota chieftain, and in 1782 given in dower to Bahawal Khan II. In 1887 its population was about 9,000, and it stood at that figure for the next twenty years.

This was the milieu which was going to be Ghulam Nabi's world for the next ten years.

When he arrived in the summer of 1887 Sadiq Muhammad Khan was only 26 and he himself 35. The small

age difference made for closer relationship which in time matured into some degree of friendship. The Nawab was only four and a half when he had ascended the throne in 1866 on the death by poisoning on 25 March of that year of his predecessor, Muhammad Bahawal Khan IV. British officials had administered the State till 1879 when Sadiq Muhammad Khan was installed. He had rendered much help to the British in their fighting in Afghanistan in the 1870s, and this was recognized in November 1880 with the high award of a Grand Cross of the Star of India. In Muslim India he was known as Subh-i-Sadiq, the True Dawn.

He had the sharp features of the Daudpotas, with the patent Abbasi nose, bright eyes, and a sunny temperament. He wore his curly hair shoulder length, liked to dress well and sometimes too gaudily for Ghulam Nabi's sedate taste. He laughed easily within his close circle, but rarely at anyone. He was courteous in his manners, but did not hesitate to be sharp if his orders were sidetracked. He was good company, and Ghulam Nabi liked him. The major defect in his character was the love of spending money on his family and friends and on palace-building, and when it ran short the habit of borrowing it on a large scale. But it is true that he found Bahawalpur a large village and left it a town of palaces and parks, and he decorated Ahmadpur Sharqiya with another palace complex which was conceived and constructed on a magnificent scale.

When Ghulam Nabi arrived the Prime Minister was Mirza Agha Muhammad Khan, who had held the appointment since 1883. Within a year of Ghulam Nabi's arrival he was replaced by Mir Ibrahim Ali Khan, who only lasted a year. His successor was Shaikh Nasiruddin who held the office from 1892 to 1898. It was Nasiruddin with whom Ghulam Nabi had his main dealings.

The court dress, which all ministers, the Nawab's personal staff and high officials had to wear, consisted of a Fez cap of Egyptian style and a Turkish frock coat.

Ghulam Nabi wore two hats for as long as he was in Bahawalpur. He was the Chief Medical Officer of the State, which made him head of the medical services and hospitals. As there was no minister for health in the council, in this capacity he was responsible to the Prime Minister, and was sometimes asked to attend Council meetings. In practice, he enjoyed the authority of a minister, and this authority became irresistible by the prestige of his second job. He was also the Nawab's personal physician and His Highness's own choice. He enjoyed an undefined, indefinable and contradictory authority. He was at the same time a high official, the head of a department, virtually a minister, and a close courtier of the Nawab as his physician. This concentration of powers brought him a high status and a great deal of honour. As we will see, sometimes this also created problems for himself, the Prime Minister, the Nawab, and the Political Agent.

He didn't have a large department to run. There were only two hospitals in Bahawalpur town and six outlying dispensaries. The staff was small and manageable and the number of patients not too large. He divided his time among three main duties: supervising the working of the hospitals, touring the countryside to inspect the dispensaries, and the day-to-day running of his office. The last included such miscellaneous responsibilities as taking stock of the available medicines, ordering the required drugs, preparing the budget of his department, recruiting the new staff, etc.

Though the terms of his appointment did not include any service in the hospitals as a physician or surgeon, he chose to put in several hours of practice a week in both hospitals. He did not want to forget his skills in the tumult of his administrative duties. He also felt that the number of available doctors was inadequate and sometimes the rush of patients was too demanding for their attention. He made it a routine to act as a consultant twice a week at each hospital

and to operate once a week at either place. The arrangement worked to everyone's satisfaction. The doctors were grateful for the sharing of their work. The patients received better treatment and had shorter waiting periods. Some well-to-do families now agreed to have the necessary surgery done locally by him instead of sending the patient to Lahore. The Nawab was glad that his Chief Medical Officer was making himself more useful to his people than he had expected. Ghulam Nabi was happy that he had stopped himself from becoming a mere bureaucrat.

Something else needed a lot of attention. The Nawab and the Council were anxious to expand the existing medical and paramedical facilities. But the funds were scarce. Of course the State was not rich, but the bulk of the revenue was diverted to meet the requirements of the court and the royal household. None in the council, including the successive Prime Ministers, had the courage to confront the Nawab with the contradiction between his desire for improvement and his refusal to reduce his personal expenses. Ghulam Nabi was too fresh at his job even to attempt to broach the subject with the Nawab. But he studied closely the mentality of the Council, the less than sure authority of the Prime Ministers, the way the Nawab's mind worked, and the genuine needs of his department. He decided to take no steps and to confide in no one (political intrigue was a traditional and well-established feature of administration in all native states) until he had consolidated his position, made a few trusty friends, proven his mettle, and come closer to the Nawab.

In the meantime he began to think seriously of constructing, equipping and staffing a much larger hospital in the town. Without making a fuss or talking too much about it, he drew plans, prepared schemes, calculated the cost, and explored the ways and means of realizing this dream. Once he gained the confidence of the Nawab, he thought, he would try to persuade him to divert a small

portion of his household budget to the hospital project. This would take some time, perhaps a few years; that is, if he kept his job and stayed on in Bahawalpur.

The task of looking after the health of the Nawab and his family turned out to be far more arduous than Ghulam Nabi had imagined on the strength of his 19-day experience of performing the same service for the Amir of Afghanistan. He had lived with the Amir or within call 24 hours a day and had had no other responsibility or office. In Bahawalpur the situation was very different.

The Nawab's residence shifted erratically from the Sadiqgarh Palace in Bahawalpur to the Dera Nawab Sahib in Ahmadpur according to his fancy and sometimes the weather. He also spent a few weeks every year in Darawar. Ghulam Nabi's headquarters were fixed in Bahawalpur as chief medical officer of the State. As personal physician to the ruler he had to go where the Nawab went. The double harness was not easy to wear. There was no difficulty when the Nawab was at Sadiqgarh; the doctor could attend to his departmental work and also be available to the Nawab. Serious problems arose when the Nawab was staying at his Dera in Ahmadpur. If Ghulam Nabi was in Bahawalpur but was needed at short notice he had to travel 20 miles to reach the royal bed. If he was living with the Nawab in Ahmadpur he had to be driven 20 miles each way to Bahawalpur to attend his office. Later a half-way solution was found. But the obligation and at times the dire necessity of being present at two places at the same time, or as soon as the existing means of locomotion allowed, were a source of tension.

One way out of the difficulty was discovered in riding. The carriages, even the royal ones, were slow. The motor cars were still in the future. The trains between Bahawalpur and Ahmadpur ran according to the timetable made in British India, not with the purpose of anticipating royal illnesses. Ghulam Nabi learnt riding. It took a few months

of hard training. He was not a young man. For most of the year either the heat was overpowering or the rains too heavy or the cold desert wind too cutting for comfort. But he persisted. Once he had mastered the art and had acquired a good seat, the best horses in the royal stable were put at his disposal. On the average it was only once a month that he had to cover the distance in the saddle, but a 20-mile hard ride improved his health. Except when it was raining or there was mud on the track, he came to enjoy the mode of travel. When the summons came, he was on his way within minutes, followed at a respectable distance by two armed attendants. If it was traffic time, a soldier of the royal household rode half a mile in advance to order the carriages travelling in either direction to halt so that the much-needed doctor could pass them without slowing down. In emergencies Ghulam Nabi galloped all the way, red in the face, and a little tired in the legs and thighs. He tried not to let the condition of his body affect the state of his mind. He examined the royal patient, the Nawab himself or his wife or one of the children or some near relation or guest, with an equanimity which surprised the Nawab. The riding visits cemented their relationship because the Nawab was appreciative of the pains the doctor took to be punctual and uncomplaining.

The proficiency in riding brought another bonus. The Nawab was a keen hunter, the wilderness of the desert was not far away, the finest of the horses were to hand, and when the hunting season came the doctor, who might be needed at any moment, was no liability for the expedition. He now rode as well as the best military men in the entourage. He did not like to kill animals, but was persuaded to shoot a few birds. In Kahnuwan, in his holidays, he had learnt to use a gun. A little persistent practice in Bahawalpur at the army range made him a good shot. As a passable hunter, but more importantly as a hunting companion, he came closer to the

Nawab. Time and opportunity were bringing the two men together. Ghulam Nabi saw in it a divine helping hand in his plans for a big new hospital.

On their arrival Ghulam Nabi and family were housed in a large bungalow in Dera Nawab Sahib, behind the Sadiqgarh Palace and very near to it so that the doctor could reach the royal patients within minutes. As time passed and Ghulam Nabi realized the variety and scope of his duties this arrangement was found to be irksome and unsatisfactory. The Nawab spent more and more of his time in Bahawalpur to be closer to the administrative machinery and to receive and entertain official visitors. Ghulam Nabi's office as Chief Medical Officer was in the capital, which meant that he had to leave Dera Nawab Sahib very early in the morning and return late in the evening. If someone in the Palace fell sick and needed immediate help a messenger was dispatched to Bahawalpur to bring him poste haste. Sometimes he was not in his office and a search had to be made to locate him. Such delays were not to the liking of the patient. His nephew, Akbar Husain, had been enrolled in the Sadiq Egerton School in Bahawalpur, and the boy travelled 40 miles every week-day. In two years' time the doctor's only son, Abdul Aziz, would be ready to go to school, and such a long and uncomfortable journey undertook every day would exhaust the child before he arrived in the classroom. Ghulam Nabi asked the Nawab to allow him to move to Bahawalpur, explaining that the new arrangement would ensure his quicker availability to the Palace and longer hours in his office. The Nawab agreed, on the condition that during his (nawab's) residence in Ahmadpur Ghulam Nabi would have to live there and travel to Bahawalpur for his office work.

In 1888 the family came to Bahawalpur town and was provided accommodation within the precincts of the Sadiqgarh Palace. The building of the palace was still in progress. Begun in 1882, the central, principal part set apart

for the royal family was complete. The park was laid out around the palace, and a few bungalows for the household staff were ready for occupation. Construction was at a leisurely pace, all the material was not readily available, and the funds came mostly from the Nawab's borrowings. The entire complex was not completed until 1895.

As head of the medical department Ghulam Nabi had a low priority, but as personal physician to the ruler he jumped to the top of the queue awaiting the allotment of official accommodation in the palace. In the Nawab's daily life, official and private, three officials stood the closest to him: the Minister for Household Affairs, the Private Secretary and the Personal Physician. The Private Secretary attended the Nawab all day, making his appointments, shepherding his visitors in and out, arranging his travels, and carrying out any other duty given to him by the Nawab's fancy. But his presence was not required at night, and he could live outside the palace. The Household Minister had the overall charge of running the Nawab's life and his residence. Though lower in the order of precedence than the Household Minister, the Personal Physician was yet the most urgently needed official. He was not dispensable. Therefore, the only two bungalows ready for occupation and opulent enough to fit their status were allotted to the Household Minister and the Personal Physician. This raised a few eyebrows, but then jealousy and intrigue were part of State politics, and Ghulam Nabi was too strongly placed to take any notice of it.

The brand new house introduced the family to many new luxuries. Three principal bedrooms had bathrooms *en suite*. The other three made do with one. Water supply was regular and generous. There were two reception rooms and a dining hall. The kitchen, separated from the dining area by a covered arcade and a pantry as large as a room, had two stores attached to it. A wide veranda ran around the house, and the building was surrounded by a garden which

gradually matured into a leafy and restful place. A high wall enclosed the garden and provided the family with a private green courtyard. The rooms were high-ceilinged and of good proportions, with large ventilators placed high near the top of the walls. The ceilings of the veranda were lower so that the ventilators opened on to the sky and brought in fresh air in summer and sunlight in winter. To cope with the sandstorms, which were common in the months of April, May and June, all doors, windows and ventilators were provided with wooden shutters. Later on, when the family developed closer personal relations with the harem, the women and children were invited to spend the hottest part of the summer days in the royal basements of the palace which had the comfort of later-day air-conditioning. Ghulam Nabi was always in a basement room next to the Nawab's apartment.

Compared to anything in the family's experience this was living in clover. The luxury was augmented by the grant of a well-appointed victoria pulled by two horses. It conveyed Ghulam Nabi to his office, Akbar Husain and Abdul Aziz to their respective schools (soon these boys were joined by another nephew of Ghulam Nabi's, Ali Muhammad from Kaithan), and occasionally the ladies of the house to Gulzar Mahal where the female members of the royal family (barring the Nawab's wife) lived. When Ghulam Nabi was invited to an official luncheon or banquet at the Nur Mahal the victoria was polished bright and the horses given a massage which gave their skins a sheen worth seeing. In addition, there were two horses for the use of the doctor when he had to gallop to Dera Nawab Sahib if the Nawab happened to be there and required attendance, or when Ghulam Nabi wanted to go out riding. First Akbar Husain and Ali Muhammad and then Abdul Aziz learned to ride and handle a horse, and before leaving Bahawalpur all three had become quite adept in the sport.

To run an establishment of this size and comfort a horde of servants was needed, and it was supplied mostly by the Palace and in a small way by Ghulam Nabi himself. The State provided 2 horsemen to accompany the doctor on his rides to Dera Nawab, 2 grooms, 1 victoria driver, 1 footman, 2 gardeners, 2 watchmen, 2 water carriers, 2 sweepers, 1 cook, 1 cook's assistant, 1 washer-man, and 2 general domestics. To these 18, Ghulam Nabi added 6 of his own, whom he had brought from Batala and 4 of whom had earlier served the family in Kahnuwan. Twenty-four men to look after 3 adults and 10 children: 2 servants per person in the house. Luxury indeed.

This was not the end of Ghulam Nabi's good fortune. His salary and perks rose with his reputation, seniority and good opinion of the Nawab. At the time of his appointment his salary had been fixed at Rs. 250 per month, with an annual increment of Rs. 20. At the end of his first year he was drawing Rs. 350. The Nawab felt that the two different tasks the doctor performed, the arduousness of his travelling between Bahawalpur and Dera Nawab Sahib, the efficiency and devotion shown by him, and the large size of his family warranted a higher salary. Five years later his pay received another jump of Rs. 200. The normal increment, later increased to Rs. 30 a year, automatically augmented the emoluments.

Then there were perquisites and other benefits generally associated with royal service. Daily food was not supplied by the Palace, but it was quite common to receive 8 or 10 times a year a few sacks of corn, huge baskets of all seasonal varieties of fruits, baskets of dates and vegetables, half a dozen canisters of turpentine oil for the lamps and lanterns, a few bolts of expensive cloth, a dozen lengths of silk, and a few *lungis*. These were the regular presents which the family soon learned to expect and a little later treat as entitlements whose rare non-arrival was made a matter of complaint to the Household Minister.

There were yet more good things to come. The Nawab was generous in rewarding his courtiers, and extravagant in returning favours. He considered his own and the family's recovery from minor ailments as favours received from the doctor. He preferred to forget that the doctor was paid for his services. In the ten years of his Bahawalpur service Ghulam Nabi must have received, in cash or kind, several thousand rupees as gifts, presents and special grants from the Nawab. No wonder the Nawab's household expenses were 65 per cent of the State's total budget.

Putting together the salary, the rent of the accommodation, the upkeep of the horses and the victoria, the wages and food of the battalion of servants,, the supplies from the Palace and the gifts and presents (reduced to a monthly average), Ghulam Nabi was making almost one thousand rupees a month. At today's value of the rupee his monthly income turns out to be approximately 3-4 lakhs, of which at least one lakh was in cash. Add to this his own and Zuhra's private income and property, and the family could be counted among the rich.

Zuhra and Nur were excited. So far they had lived in comfort, Zuhra in Kahnuwan in something more than comfort. But life in Bahawalpur was superior to any state they were used to. The generous income was welcome and so were the accompanying conveniences. But the privileges rated higher. Living in close proximity to the ruling family carried its own valuable rights and entitlements. Zuhra and Nur made friends with the ladies of the harem, and as time passed their visits to Gulzar Palace became more and more frequent. In Zuhra the Nawab's wife discovered a wise and sincere counsellor, and in Nur a companion and confidante of her own age. (It must be remembered that the Nawab's female household consisted of ladies who had been born, reared and allowed to grow up in a severely closed and small circle. Zuhra and Nur had seen the world from close quarters in Kahnuwan, Lahore, Batala and Peshawar, and knew a lot

more about life than the royal women). This extra connection brought Ghulam Nabi even closer to the Nawab.

A part of the glory of living in the palace passed on to the children. When Abdul Aziz entered the school he enjoyed a status only next to the princes of the State. Akbar Husain and Ali Muhammad too basked in this sun of preferment. In the absence of any school for girls, Barkat, Fatima, Wazir, Amna and Rakho were put into the hands of an elderly tutor who coached them in Persian, Urdu, elementary arithmetic and history and geography. A maulavi sahib came in the afternoon to teach them how to read the Quran and say their prayers; this session was joined by Abdul Aziz, Ali Muhammad and Akbar Husain. But this group of young students was broken up within a year when three sisters (Barkat, Fatima and Wazir) were married off in one extended ceremony of festivities in Batala in November 1888.

In these years much happened within the family circle which needs to be recorded. Ghulam Nabi's settling down in Bahawalpur coincided with the passing out of Ghulam Muhammad from the medical school of Lahore. To Ghulam Nabi's delight he had performed much better than everyone's expectations. He stood fourth among the 14 who graduated that year (so far the largest group in the history of the school), and the only Muslim in the list. He was now 25 (Ghulam Nabi had graduated at the remarkably young age of 21, but that had been a case of very exceptional devotion, initiative and paternal pressure), married, and father of one daughter. Ghulam Nabi had forged a special bond of affection with his youngest brother when he was still a small child. They had lived together in Lahore, and in the summer holidays in Peshawar and Batala. Ghulam Nabi had saved him from a life of lethargy and little education through love, discipline and personal example. Now his protégé's success gave him more

pleasure than anything else so far in his life. He savoured his own triumph. It was an achievement which the two brothers shared in equal measure. Zuhra's happiness was overwhelming. She hugged and kissed the tall, well-built 25-year old youth as if he was still a child. Ghulam Muhammad spent a few months in Bahawalpur, enjoying the company of the family and resting his mind and limbs after the hard work of preparing and sitting for his finals.

Zuhra asked Ghulam Nabi to get his brother a job in the State medical service, but received a respectful but firm no. He was not going to ask the Nawab a favour so early in his career in the State. That was nepotism. It would lower him in the Nawab's estimation and lose him his confidence and trust. So strong was Ghulam Nabi's stand that Zuhra did not insist. After some discussion Ghulam Muhammad was dispatched to Amritsar to start his medical practice. Batala was considered but rejected as too small a place for an ambitious and able physician. Ghulam Nabi granted his brother a monthly allowance of Rs. 200 until he was well established and had a comfortable regular income.

This was the age of marrying children, daughters in particular, when they were by today's standard mere children. Three of Ghulam Nabi's daughters were considered to be fit for conjugal life, though Barkat was only 16, Fatima 14, and Wazir a mere 12. In 1887-88 Zuhra had been looking around for suitable boys, making inquiries, and negotiating the deal. Their betrothals were announced in early 1888, a little after the move to Bahawalpur.

Barkat was affianced to Azizuddin's and Sharfo's elder son, Muhammad Husain, who was living in Batala with his mother. This was Ghulam Nabi's decision, accepted by Zuhra without demur, and spoke volumes for his high moral character, unbounded generosity, spirit of forgiveness, and loyalty to the family. Anyone else who had suffered so much at Sharfo's hands in the malleable and impressionable years

of his childhood, seen her treating her husband (his own elder brother) like a doormat, and later observed a total lack of courtesy in her behaviour towards his wife, would not even have considered this match for a minute. But his values were different, and he looked at the problem against the family background. It was true that Azizuddin had left Sharfo for another woman and cut himself asunder from the family (for which he could not be wholly blamed), but he was still his elder brother. It was also true that Sharfo had been a source of trouble and discord for everyone even after being granted refuge in his house, but she was his wife's sister and his responsibility and had nowhere else to go. It was also true that she had not brought up the boys in the family tradition of hard work, even temper and respect for the elders, but that made it all the more imperative that he took them in hand, educate them, make them his own sons-in-law, and get them jobs. That is how he thought and, notwithstanding all that had happened, he concluded that the best way to put Sharfo's mind at rest, show his esteem for Azizuddin, and ensure a respectable future for their boys, was to marry them to his own daughters.

In deciding to do this, even against the real wishes of Zuhra, Ghulam Nabi established a tradition of giving away his daughters to boys within the larger family who were socially and materially his inferiors. His elder son, Abdul Aziz, upheld the tradition, though in his case the results were unhappy. Ghulam Nabi's mind should be judged by the values of his age, not by those of ours. He was the head of the family and its maker. His first loyalty lay to his own blood. Within the family, the rich, the not-so-rich and the poor were neither distinguished nor separated. The only touchstone was *sharáfat*, a concept and a value which can only be expressed by using several English words: blood, background, upbringing, good behaviour, character. The noun produced the protean adjective *sharíf*. A *sharíf ádamí* (*ádamí*=person,

man) was one who had all or most of the values listed above. He was a gentleman, in the true English sense. A sharif *khándán* (*khándán*=family, in both the nuclear sense and the larger blood group) was a family whose members lived by these values. Among these members there may be an exception here and there, but these were exceptions. A bounder may appear once in a while among the gentlemen, but that happened in the best of families. The crucial point is that money was of no consideration in this search and choice. The rat race began much later, after 1947.

The second match arranged at the same time was of a similar kind. Fatima was promised to one Khairuddin, the son of a many-times-removed cousin of Ghulam Nabi's. The boy's father, who lived in Amritsar, was a man of very limited resources, and after the wedding Khairuddin was supported by Ghulam Nabi and after his death by his two sons; even after Fatima's death in 1922 (Khairuddin died in 1928); and their children were educated and jobs arranged for them by these two brothers, and later three of the four were given wives from Ghulam Nabi's family.

The third girl, Wazir, was betrothed to an outsider, Muhammad Umar. Umar's ancestors had served as hereditary *chobdárs* (mace-bearers) to the provincial and regional governors under the later Mughals, and had built two beautiful havelis in the Tibba (The Mound) quarter of Batala. Umar had been called to the bar in London, and was now practising law in Amritsar.

Ghulam Nabi could not be absent from Bahawalpur for more than a few days. Therefore the dates of all the three weddings were fixed very close to each other. Zuhra, Nur and the children left for Batala at the beginning of September 1888 to prepare for the happy occasion. It was to be the first such event in the family since its migration from Kahnuwan and the first wedding(s) in the Ghulam Nabi-Nur family. In families which could afford it, a

marriage was a time for a reunion of the whole clan. Zuhra and Nur expected over one hundred relatives who would not only attend but arrive about a month in advance to stay as house guests. Arrangements were made for them: the most closely related to live in the haveli, others in houses and smaller havelis borrowed or rented and within walking distance of the principal haveli. Among the latter accommodation was the large house of Mian Husain Bakhsh (Sir Fazli Husain's father) in Kucha Din Muhammad. Our own haveli was thoroughly renovated and furnished or refurnished. A lot of fresh linen was purchased. Some servants arrived from Bahawalpur, some were already posted in Batala to look after Sharfo, some more were temporarily recruited from among the old retainers living in Kahnuwan or their sons and daughters.

Ghulam Nabi had been in Bahawalpur for just over a year, and it was neither proper nor advisable to be absent from duty for a long period. He sent his family to Batala in September 1888, but detained with him Ali Muhammad and Akbar Husain who had to attend school.

As soon as Zuhra and Nur reached Batala the preparatory arrangements for the three weddings began in earnest. There was so much to do. Lists of guests were drawn up. Couriers were dispatched to the nearby villages and to Mukerian, Dasuha and Kaithan with letters of invitation or verbal messages. On their way they were to visit Kahnuwan to inform Zuhra's old friends, cultivators and retainers of the coming event and extend a general invitation to attend it. Next, the haveli was given a thorough cleaning, all rooms and verandas and staircases were whitewashed, and some rooms renovated for the guests. The smaller havelis and annexes were refurbished to accommodate more people. A dozen old servants came from Kahnuwan to lend a hand. A few very close relatives arrived in late September to help Nur. It was the first

auspicious occasion in her family and she wanted to make it an unforgettable event for the whole clan.

The making of the dowries demanded close attention. Thanks to the Bahawalpur royal ladies Nur had an ample and rich collection of cloths, materials and fabrics of great variety and also jewellery. She need not have bought more, but she did. Several tailors, the best in the town, were put to work. As was the custom then, and it lasted another fifty years, they toiled all day in one room and the adjoining long veranda of the haveli. Zuhra and Nur gave instructions, suggested new patterns and designs, chose the shades and colours, checked the stitching, tested the quality of sewing, and in general supervised everything relating to dressmaking.

Jewellers and goldsmiths arrived with their wares, new models and patterns and novel suggestions. The women examined and selected, ordered some new ornaments to be prepared, and asked copies to be made of a few pieces of Bahawalpuri jewellery. Nur was the prime agent in all this, but Zuhra gave her advice and shared the daughter-in-law's burdens and responsibilities. The elderly ladies from across the Beas had their own ideas and suggestions, most of which did not find acceptance in a family which by now was urbanized and had seen much in Lahore and Bahawalpur and liked it.

The guests began to reach Batala in early October. In those expansive times, a month's stay was the norm. The clan had not gathered since before Ghulam Nabi's departure for Bahawalpur and it welcomed the opportunity. And then the occasion was so special: Waziruddin's and Zuhra's first grandchildren were getting married, and Ghulam Nabi's and Nur's first children, and one of the bridegrooms was no other than Aziuzuddin's first-born. Then there were three weddings, all together. How could any relative, however remotely connected, and any old friend, neighbour or old rayyet from Kahnuwan stay away? Besides, there were several Kakkezai

families living in Batala, Amritsar and the neighbouring villages who came. There had never been such a reunion before in the haveli.. The only noticeable absence was Ghulam Qadir's family. Piranditti was expecting a child and the pregnancy was too far advanced to allow such a long journey. When Ghulam Nabi arrived in the last week of October he was pleased to see that all the hard work had been done by Zuhra and Nur and found it to his satisfaction.

Zuhra told Ghulam Nabi that she and Nur had gone to see Azizuddin and asked him to attend the weddings, but he had given a noncommittal reply. She said that she and Nur very much wanted that he should come. He was the eldest son of Waziruddin, and no matter if he had left Sharfo and then contracted another marriage, he must be persuaded to join the family on this joyful occasion. Ghulam Nabi was glad to hear this because he had already made up his mind before coming to Batala to try his utmost to bring Azizuddin into the family fold, even if temporarily. Sharfo was furious when she heard of this, but Ghulam Nabi brushed aside her angry reaction by declaring that this was a matter between him and his elder brother.

Ghulam Nabi had kept in touch with Azizuddin since 1880, in person when he was in Batala and by post when he was not. Now when he knocked at the Khanda Khola door it was opened by Azizuddin himself. On seeing who the caller was a smile passed over his lined face like sunlight on a ploughed field. He held Ghulam Nabi in his arms and kissed him on the forehead, and then took him upstairs to the living quarters. They sat down in the front room to talk and reminisce. Fazl Bibi came in, met Ghulam Nabi cordially, and fetched some titbits and dainties to eat.

The two brothers talked of the times past when their lives had touched each other fleetingly or abidingly: the days of Kahnuwan when Ghulam Nabi was a child, the ten years of Batala when they lived together. How much he

owed to his brother, realized Ghulam Nabi: love, affection, solicitude, hospitality, protection against Sharfo's barbs, interest in the progress of his studies. And, later when most of the relatives had censured and frowned upon him and a few ostracized him on account of his second marriage, and even Zuhra had shown her displeasure, though not harshly for she knew well how Sharfo had maltreated her younger son, Ghulam Nabi alone had passed no judgement, spoke no hard words, and preferred to recall how kind Azizuddin had been during his school days in Batala and often stood between him and that shrew, Sharfo.

Then Ghulam Nabi came to the real purpose of his visit and beseeched his brother to attend the weddings of his daughters and his (Azizuddin's) own nieces, and above all of his own first-born. That clinched the matter. Azizuddin readily agreed. Why should he miss his own son's wedding? He had not seen so many close relatives since long, oh! too long. In his heart he had missed them all. Isolation had made the heart grow fonder. Sharfo or no Sharfo, he would be present at all the ceremonies and stay at the big haveli all day long, but come home for the night. But, he insisted, Fazl Bibi would not accompany him. Ghulam Nabi understood and accepted the precondition.

So Azizuddin spent several happy days at the big haveli. On Zuhra's and Ghulam Nabi's strict instructions not a word was uttered by any of the guests about his second marriage. Reports of Sharfo's tantrums had reached far and near, and the clan sympathized, secretly or openly, with the *ci-devant* henpecked husband, and welcomed his reappearance in the family circle. In those days blood was really thicker than water. Azizuddin was their own flesh and blood, and was received back with enthusiasm, courtesy and respect. Zuhra was very happy to see that her first-born was reconciled with the family. Only Sharfo had a devil in her, snapped at everyone, grumbled and muttered all the time, scowled and glowered at everyone, and refused

to enter the room where Azizuddin was present. No one took notice of this protest.

The weddings came off on three consecutive days. On 2 November Barkat was married off to Muhammad Husain (Azizuddin's older son), on the 3rd. Fatima to Khairuddin of Amritsar, and on the 4th. Wazir to Muhammad Umar. On the day of the last wedding a telegram arrived from Dodhi giving the news of the birth of a son to Ghulam Qadir and Piranditti (their first male child). This was Abdul Hamid, my eldest *mámun*, and Zuhra's fourth grandson (after Muhammad Husain, Akbar Husain and Abdul Aziz). The tidings added to the happiness of all present.

Once the ceremonies were over Ghulam Nabi hurried back to Bahawalpur, leaving Zuhra and Nur to watch over the dispersal of the tribe and the cleaning up of the house. He took Akbar Husain and Ali Muhammad with him so that their schooling did not suffer adversely. Once the guests had departed Zuhra wanted to visit Ghulam Qadir and see her latest grandson. It was a long and unfamiliar journey to Dodhi and they needed a male chaperon. The newly-wedded Muhammad Husain, who was not working anywhere, was asked to accompany them. With him and two trusted servants the two women travelled to Dodhi with the 10-year old Amna, 7-year old Allah Rakhi, 4-year old Abdul Aziz, and 2-year old Umrao.

All went well and they stayed there for two weeks. Ghulam Qadir and Piranditti were delighted to have them. In those days, going from Batala to a place as far away as Dodhi was like visiting Timbuctoo. Ghulam Qadir was the only brother living outside the Punjab and had few visitors. His mother's arrival gladdened his heart. Nur and Piranditti got on famously together. The cousins mixed well; 15 years later two of them (Abdul Aziz and Zainab) were to become life partners – my father and mother. Ghulam Qadir and Piranditti were naturally eager to know how the weddings had gone, and Zuhra and Nur satisfied their curiosity by supplying them with every little

detail. Interminable conversations went on till late into the night. There was so much to talk about, convey and comment upon. The weather was fine and the *tahsildar's* resources and official facilities ample. Everyone enjoyed to his or her fill.

After nearly three hectic months Zuhra and Nur were back in Bahawalpur with the children in mid-December (1888). Life resumed its old routine, but with a significant difference. Three daughters had gone to their own homes, soon Ali Muhammad was to leave for Kaithan to study tibb. The family shrank in numbers. But soon the gaps began to be filled up. In early 1889 Wazir returned to Bahawalpur, refusing to live with her husband. On 21 October of the same year Nur produced another son, named Abdul Hamid. And two years later (1891) Ghulam Nabi had his last child, a daughter called Sultan. As Muhammad Husain had little education and no skills Ghulam Nabi arranged for his appointment as a compounder in a hospital in Bahawalpur. With him came his wife and Ghulam Nabi's eldest daughter, Barkat. The couple could not manage on a compounder's salary and they lived with Ghulam Nabi. They had their first two children, both daughters, in the Sadiqgarh Palace house.

To complete the family record during Ghulam Nabi's stay in Bahawalpur, let me add that Ghulam Qadir had a daughter, Kulsum, on 2 March 1892, and a son, Abdul Majid, on 22 April (or 10 May) 1894. Ghulam Muhammad's wife had died in the early 1890s, and in 1895 Zuhra arranged his second marriage to a girl from Amritsar, called Amir. The wedding took place with much éclat and Ghulam Nabi defrayed all expenses.

CLASH WITH THE RESIDENT

As I have said above, for most of Ghulam Nabi's time in Bahawalpur the prime minister was Ibrahim Ali Khan. The doctor's relations with him were pleasant. The cabinet had

only two or three ministers with independent portfolios. The prime minister looked after all other departments of state. As there was no minister in charge of public health, Ghulam Nabi, in his capacity as Chief Medical Officer of the state, was directly responsible to the prime minister. But this subordination was a mere formality. With his heavy duties and his supervision of a large number of departments, the prime minister rarely interfered with Ghulam Nabi's work. Thus in practice the Chief Medical Officer was his own minister. He attended all cabinet meetings when matters relating to public health were on the agenda. His appointment as the ruler's personal physician added much to his status, dignity and authority. His position became even stronger when gradually it became common knowledge that the Nawab liked his physician and their relationship was flowering into a degree of friendship. The cabinet was also impressed by his wise counsel on policy matters. Therefore, at times when even matters other than public health were under discussion he was invited to the cabinet meetings, and the ministers listened to him attentively. Thus, without being a member of the cabinet he was generally looked upon as a minister, and treated as such.

At this time there were only two hospitals in the State and both were located in the town of Bahawalpur. Notwithstanding the State's small population and limited resources, the Nawab and the cabinet wanted to build at least one hospital of such a high quality that besides catering to all the needs of the people of the State it would attract patients from the surrounding areas.

This project was launched in 1888 and Ghulam Nabi was put in charge of it. He consulted many experts, including the teachers of his old School and the staff of the Mayo Hospital of Lahore. He also sought advice and assistance from the provincial health department. He arranged for the sanction of a large site in the town, prepared estimates of construction,

drew up lists of the required staff, and made an inventory of the equipment and machinery for the hospital. Taking advantage of his easy and familiar relations with the Nawab, he persuaded the court to allocate a respectable annual grant towards the execution of the project. It was a grandiose plan and required vast amounts of money. The rate of progress was continuous but slow.

The financial problem was serious because of the Nawab's penchant for building palaces for himself and spending generously on the vivacious ados of the court. The State exchequer was the poorer by it. The figures of the budget tell the whole tale. Between 1887 and 1897 the average annual income of the State was 1.8 million rupees. This revenue was spent in this manner: Rs. 200,000 on public works, Rs. 200,000 on the army, Rs. 100,000 on police, Rs. 100,000 on pensions, Rs. 100,000 on revenue administration, and 1.1. million rupees on the court. In other words, out of a total income of 1.8 million the Nawab spent 1.1 million on his person, palaces, the court and other private affairs. He had borrowed large sums to build the palaces, and the biggest calls on his personal allocation were the payment of interest on the loans and a partial repayment of the capital borrowed. In this way his interests, tastes, preferences, habits and free spending affected adversely the administration and governance of the State.

When the ministers and top civil servants noticed that every year Ghulam Nabi, using his influence with the Nawab, succeeded in getting a handsome grant for his hospital project, they tried to persuade him to exert himself also on behalf of other departments. To which his reply was, "The construction of the new hospital falls within the province of my department of public health. I take my case to His Highness, argue with him, convince him of its value and soundness and dire need, use my influence as his personal physician, at times beg him, and get my grant

sanctioned. But if I approach him on behalf of other departments, that would be improper." This silenced most of the critics. But there was a small group which rejected the argument and persisted in their demand.

Had the matter ended there the impending crisis would have been averted. But some ministers and advisers took umbrage at Ghulam Nabi's refusal to plead their case before the Nawab. They resorted to backbiting and other unsavoury practices. He chose to take no notice of this campaign of smearing his name. He was performing his official duties to the satisfaction of the ruler and his prime minister. His conscience was clear. He thought there was nothing to worry about.

Disappointed at the failure of their plans, the conniving cabal now decided to use the Resident for its purpose. Under British rule the government appointed an officer of the Indian Civil Service or the Indian Political Service as a Resident in the native states to ensure good administration and keep an eye on the ruler. Large and prominent states like Hyderabad, Mysore, Kashmir, Baroda and Bhopal, had one Resident each. Smaller states were grouped together under one Resident. In the Punjab, Bahawalpur was included in the group known as the Phulkian States, of which the members were Patiala, Nabha, Faridkot, Jind, Suket and Mandi. One Resident was put in charge of this cluster of states. His permanent seat was fixed at Patiala, but he toured the other states at regular intervals.

So far Ghulam Nabi had had good relations with whoever was the Resident. Now the clique opposed to him and jealous of his friendly relations with the Nawab began to poison the Resident against him. He was told that the doctor was a good man but exercised undue influence on the ruler. He used his extraordinary position to promote the cause of his own department. In other ways too he was uncooperative. This created an imbalance in the finances of

the State. The Resident, it was suggested, should speak to the doctor and ask him to persuade the ruler to be even-handed and not to show undue favours to the public health department. The Resident had made it a habit not to verify the reports he received or heard. He also strongly disapproved of the Nawab's prodigality, improvidence and wasteful expenditure on the strength of heavy borrowing. He readily gave ear to the tale he was told.

He said he wanted to meet the Chief Medical Officer. When the two men met the Resident presented what he had been told as his own views, and asked the doctor to use his friendship with the Nawab in the interest of the State by making him cut down on his court expenses and spare more money for the various departments. Ghulam Nabi answered that he was no friend of the Nawab, merely his personal physician. He enjoyed good relations with his master, but this fact did not give him the authority or standing to tell the ruler how to rearrange his financial matters. The Resident realized the futility of arguing his case. But he was full of wiles. He ended the meeting by saying that they would continue the discussion during his next visit and in the meantime Ghulam Nabi should give more thought to the problem.

The next meeting was repetitive and fruitless. There was no give in the Resident's attitude. On his third visit his insistence irked Ghulam Nabi. On the fourth his patience gave way, and he took the vital decision to offer his resignation to the Nawab.

Generally Ghulam Nabi met the Nawab so often that till now there had been no occasion for requesting a special audience. When a note from the doctor reached His Highness asking for an immediate interview on an urgent matter he was surprised. On the same afternoon he summoned Ghulam Nabi and after the usual courtesies asked him what had made him request a private meeting. Ghulam Nabi narrated the story from the beginning,

naming his detractors, describing the Resident's hostile and imperious attitude, and expressing his desire to be relieved of his duties. The Nawab had heard unconfirmed rumours and attributed them to bureaucratic intrigues so endemic in the courts of the native states. He had no idea how serious the crisis was. First, he tried to pacify Ghulam Nabi in general terms, complimenting him on his work, expressing his own complete satisfaction with the way he had been performing his duties both as his personal physician and as Chief Medical Officer, and finally declaring that as long as he had complete confidence in his person and work there was no reason or ground for his offering his resignation.

Ghulam Nabi replied, "Nawab Sahib, the situation is more grave than that. The Resident is a powerful man and insists that I should advise you on how to spend your privy purse. Who am I to do that? His insistence increases with every visit to Bahawalpur. It is becoming menacing. My patience is coming to the end of its tether. Please get me out of this predicament by letting me go."

The Nawab was anxious to retain Ghulam Nabi. He made some alternative proposals. "Let us explore other possibilities to settle the affair. I can do a number of things. I can replace you with another Chief Medical Officer. That should end the controversy about the financing of the new hospital. You will continue as my personal physician without any unfavourable effect on your present salary and privileges. I can write to the Lieutenant Governor, complaining against the Resident's improper pressure on one of my principal staff officers, and reminding him that your selection and appointment were made by one of his predecessors himself, and the file contained his exceptionally strong recommendation. I will tell him that the Resident is bothering me indirectly in asking you to adopt a certain course of action."

Ghulam Nabi heard all this with much pleasure and regret. Pleasure on the Nawab's good opinion of him and

the pains he was prepared to take to keep him in Bahawalpur; regret on leaving the service of such a congenial and understanding employer. But he knew that if the matter was taken up to the Lieutenant Governor's level there may be complications in the relationship between the Nawab and the provincial government. At best the Resident would be transferred; at worst a very diplomatic and polite reprimand would be conveyed to the Nawab in a private meeting between him and the Lieutenant Governor. Even if the Resident was transferred, his successor might behave even more overbearingly and exert his official presence more crudely in order to avenge the treatment meted out to his fellow-British predecessor. However one looked at the issue, Ghulam Nabi's continued presence in the state would embarrass the ruler and create problems for him. Ghulam Nabi had great respect for the Nawab, and much affection had developed in the ten years of their close association. He hated the thought of being the cause of the smallest imbroglio for the Nawab. Therefore, firmly but most respectfully, he urged the Nawab not to act upon any of his own suggestions and ideas, but to accept his doctor's resignation and let the matter rest there.

Seeing that Ghulam Nabi was bent upon taking the course he had chosen, the Nawab agreed most reluctantly to accept his decision.

Next day Ghulam Nabi sent in his resignation, simply explaining that he was doing this for personal reasons, and requesting that it should take effect immediately. In reply the Nawab thanked him for the quality and dedication of his services, expressing his regret on losing him, and accepted the resignation. At the same time he issued an order that, in view of Ghulam Nabi's meritorious service in connection with the planning, building and equipping the new hospital, which had been beyond the call of his duties, and his record as his own personal physician, he should be granted a pension for life

equal to his present salary. To add to his appreciation, he recorded that the payment of this pension would not be stopped even if Ghulam Nabi got another employment elsewhere. This privilege was unprecedented in the history of the state, and my grandfather continued to receive the pension till his death in February 1926.

I may mention here in passing that the hospital on which Ghulam Nabi had lavished so much of his time and energy, and on whose account he was forced to resign, was opened in 1898, the year following his departure from the state. It was given the name of Jubilee Hospital. It was extended in 1904 and rechristened Bahawal Victoria Hospital. The *Bahawalpur Gazette* has recorded that for many years after 1904 there was no infirmary of its standard and quality outside the major Indian cities and it attracted patients from several faraway places in the Punjab, Sind and Rajistan.

Ghulam Nabi spent a few more days in Bahawalpur, carrying out his protocol duties of making goodbye calls on the prime minister, members of the cabinet, prominent men of the court and his colleagues. The Nawab hosted a farewell banquet for his doctor. At the same time Zuhra and Nur had their last meetings with the members of the royal harem. Ghulam Nabi was seen off with full honours. The Minister of the Royal Household was present at the railway station platform to represent the Nawab. A special train carried the family back to Batala.

YEARS OF REST IN BATALA: 1897-1905

This was the late summer of 1897. The big haveli was once again made into a home. With his private income, the pension from Bahawalpur and the savings of the last ten years, Ghulam Nabi could live in great comfort, and he did so. He also needed a rest after the long hard innings in Bahawalpur. Therefore, he neither tried to seek an

employment nor started his medical practice. His life in Batala was one of ease and indulgence in his hobbies and interests. He managed his properties, kept in touch with the various branches of the family, tutored his children, and wrote Persian poetry. He was cultivating indolence.

At the time of his daughters' triple weddings in 1888 Ghulam Nabi had to hire a lot of crockery for the hundreds of guests. There was no firm in Amritsar or Lahore which could supply 500 placings of uniform pattern and shade and of high quality china. His refined sense of decorum had been offended at seeing his guests eating out of a variety of dishes of varying designs and sizes, and not all made of china. In Bahawalpur he had seen the palace crockery and liked it. In 1895, he had ordered 15 full dining and tea sets from Meakin, a well-known British china manufacturer. The crockery arrived in 1896 and was used for the first time in 1897 when he married off another three of his daughters.

The colour of the Meakin china pattern was green. Instead of ordering every piece of the set he had purchased what met his needs. One large plate, one medium and one small were ordered to the number of 500 each. In addition, 50 large platters and 50 small ones were bought: the first for pulao and zarda, the second for kebabs and halwa. The tea sets were limited to teapots, milk pots, sugar pots, quarter plates and cups and saucers. As most people then drank Kashmiri green tea in bowls, the tea sets rarely came into service.

When I went to live in Batala in 1937 it amused me to discover the place where this horde was stored. In the library hall on the ground floor, next to the huge staircase which connected with the upper storey, there were 18 tall wooden bookshelves with doors, all built into the walls: four each on the shorter side and 10 on the longer side. The right hand shorter side was adjacent to the staircase. The fourth bookshelf on this side was not what it appeared to be. Its doors opened into a large cavern running deep to the

front side of the hall, the vault supporting the 45-step 10-foot wide staircase.

The whole china collection was stored there, stack after stack, the gold on the rims of the plates glittering in the semi-darkness of the cache. Not even one tenth of it was ever in service during my stay in Batala. But once a year the whole collection was taken out, dusted, washed and put back. It must have offered an unimaginable treasure to the looters who ransacked the haveli in 1947.

Two months after his return from Bahawalpur Ghulam Nabi married off another three of his daughters. In October (1897) Umrao was wedded to Akbar Husain (Azizuddin's younger son), Allah Rakhi to Muhammad Husain (son of Faqir Ali), and Amna to Hakimuddin (Nur's nephew).

Once again, after nine years, the haveli witnessed merrymaking on a large scale. The clan turned up as usual, expecting great hospitality, and was not disappointed. All around there was much din and hubbub, but in good humour. Gales of laughter blew through the rooms and verandas and on the roofs. Children, whose number multiplied with every reunion, frolicked and frisked. Babies cooed and gurgled. There was sparkle and vivacity, gaiety and glee, and a determination to enjoy oneself with abandon.

The departure of the three daughters reduced the size of the family by nearly half, though this did not affect noticeably the number of residents in the haveli. Several small families who had no place of their own were housed within its four walls. All lived together peacefully. It was an age in which close relationship meant much, traditional values were respected, affection was generously given and freely returned, most matters were settled by mutual consultation, and relatives of all varieties visited each other regularly. Nur's hospitality was proverbial. She liked to have a lot of people around her. Now that six of her daughters had left for their own homes, her need for genial

and intimate company was even more urgent. She invited men, women and children from around Batala and across the Beas and insisted that they stayed with her as long as they could.

Gradually a life without regular work began to irk Ghulam Nabi. Having toiled round the clock for ten years he now found the routine of slothful ease tedious and wearisome. He feared that this boredom might turn him into a drone. One year's inactivity was enough. In August his daughter Amna died at the age of 20 after less than a year of her marriage to Hakimuddin. He was distressed. At the end of the year he suddenly decided to practice medicine, but in Amritsar, not Batala.

The choice of Amritsar was dictated by a powerful sentiment. Ghulam Muhammad, his darling youngest brother, had graduated from the Punjab School of Medicine in 1887, and was now practising in Amritsar. To him this brother was like a son on whom he had lavished his unbounded love since his very birth, brought up, educated, married off and settled in life – all at his own expense. Now that he was inclined to resume his practice nothing could be better than doing it in partnership with Ghulam Muhammad.

When Zuhra and Nur heard of this they firmly refused to leave Batala. In the last 22 years they had made too many moves – from Kahnuwan to Batala, then to Peshawar, then back to Batala, then to Bahawalpur, and finally back to Batala. They were tired of this peripatetic life. They decided to stay back in Batala with the children. Only Abdul Aziz would go to Amritsar with his father because he had just passed his matriculation examination and there was no college in Batala. Father and son would visit Batala as often as they could.

So Ghulam Nabi moved to Amritsar in December 1898, rented a house near Ghulam Muhammad's residence, and started working in his clinic.

In November 1899 Ghulam Nabi received an offer from Nawab Sir Aminuddin Ahmad, the Nawab of Loharu, of

personal physician to himself. The background of this offer went back to Ghulam Nabi's first meeting with the Nawab at the end of 1890 in Lahore on the occasion of the arrival of the Prince of Wales where all the Rajas and Nawabs of the Punjab had gathered to welcome the heir-apparent to the British throne. A week later, on 3 February, they again assembled to see the Prince opening the Victoria Town Hall of Lahore. The Nawab of Bahawalpur introduced Ghulam Nabi to the ruler of Loharu, and the two men discovered that they had a common passion for Persian poetry. Probably the memory of this meeting stayed with Sir Aminuddin, and the Nawab of Bahawalpur might have kept Loharu informed of later developments and of Ghulam Nabi's resignation from his service in 1897.

Two years later Loharu needed a personal physician and, acting on Bahawalpur's advice, he sent a formal offer in November (1899) to Ghulam Nabi in Amritsar. Tired of his inactivity he might have accepted the appointment but for the bitter memories of the intrigues in Bahawalpur, the behaviour of the Resident, and his forced resignation. Loharu may be a little different from Bahawalpur, but not much. And the ubiquitous and coercive Resident was bound to be there too. He declined the offer with much regret because he had liked the Nawab of Loharu and was aware of his good reputation as a ruler and a man of cultural accomplishments.

Ghulam Nabi's practice in Amritsar did not last long. Anyone who had held a high appointment in a native state and lived in close companionship with the ruler for ten years would have found it hard to act as an ordinary physician, open his clinic at regular hours, wait for the patients, write out prescriptions, and often visit the very old and the more seriously ill at their homes. Things did not work out as he had expected. Of course, he was glad to be with Ghulam Muhammad and his small family. But long years spent in British government's and a native state's service were not a

good training for private practice. The praxis was making demands on his lifestyle and the old fixed ways which he could not meet, not at his age. There were other frustrations too. His family was in Batala, and though he visited them two or three times a month he missed the comforts of a home and the company of his mother, wife and children. Abdul Aziz had gone to Lahore to join the Forman Christian College. He was left alone and felt bereft. So in 1900 he returned to Batala and spent the next five years there.

His own family in Batala was now reduced to his two children, Abdul Hamid and Sultan, mother, wife and daughter Wazir. He spent his time in studying recent developments in medicine, general books on a variety of subjects, coaching Abdul Hamid, and visiting Azizuddin and other relatives living in the town. Occasionally he went to Lahore to see Abdul Aziz who was living in the college hostel in Nila Gumbad, and to buy books. A little earlier, the first proper bookshop had been opened in Lahore by a Hindu, Rama Krishna, in Anarkali near the Mall Road end, and that is where it stayed till 1947. It had a rich stock of quality publications and was patronized by the British administrators, rulers of native states, and the Indian elite of Lahore. Ghulam Nabi spent hours browsing and selecting what he found of his interest. This was the beginning of the making of our family library. Abdul Aziz often went with his father to the shop, and received his earliest training in the arts of loving, valuing, assessing, buying and reading books.

In October 1901 Amir Abdur Rahman died, and when the news reached Ghulam Nabi old memories came rushing back to his mind. He recalled his close association with the Afghan ruler, the few but exciting days when he had lived with a king, the Amir's keen interest in the life and thinking of the Muslims of India, the searching questions he had asked, his courtesy and kindnesses. The news made him realize, with some surprise, how deep an impact this

association had made on him. He prayed for the departed soul, and sat down to compose a letter of condolence to Abdur Rahman's son and successor, Habibullah. In respectful but dignified language he outlined to the new ruler his own 19-day service with his father in 1885 and the deep impress it had left on him. In reply he received a formal but gracious acknowledgement from the king's chief secretary.

Ghulam Qadir had been a stranger to Batala for too long. He had visited Bahawalpur twice, but that too was now so long ago. Zuhra and Ghulam Nabi wrote to him that he was being sorely missed by the family and particularly by his brothers. He must come on a long leave and meet the clan; he had not even seen the children of some of them. Ghulam Qadir himself realized that he had lived far away for too long. He craved to see his brothers and their growing families.

In the October of 1902 the Dodhi branch arrived in Batala in full strength: Ghulam Qadir, Piranditti, their two daughters and three sons. They announced that this time they would stay for one whole month, which pleased everyone. Abdul Aziz was back from Lahore after taking his B.A. examination. Abdul Hamid and Sultan were there already. Now they were joined by five cousins whom they had met after so long: Zainab, Kulsum, Abdul Hamid, Abdul Majid and Abdur Rashid. Several people came from Kaithan and Dasuha to join the gathering. Some close friends arrived from Kahnuwan and were pleased to see all the sons of Waziruddin and recalled their childhood. A score of relatives from around the town joined the assembly.

The haveli once again resounded with animated conversation and laughter. The atmosphere was jubilant and festive. Serious but warm-hearted talk of the elders intermingled with the broad grins and hoots of laughter of the young boys and girls, and in the background could be heard the titter, giggles and chortles of the children. There was a gay abandon all around.

The happiest person in the house was Zuhra. How much she had longed to have all her sons with her under one roof for some weeks! This had not even happened in Kahnuwan, where after a few years of childhood each son had left for Batala or Lahore. Then they had got jobs, married and scattered. They had come to attend the weddings of Ghulam Nabi's daughters in twos or threes. But never had all the four been with her, something for which her maternal instinct had longed so much. Ghulam Muhammad closed his clinic in Amritsar for a month and came to Batala to be with his brothers.

Muhammad Husain was employed in Bahawalpur, and Akbar Husain had taken his mother, Sharfo, with him wherever he was posted. This left the way open for Azizuddin to visit the haveli and spend the whole day there, often now bringing Fazl Bibi with him. The three younger brothers had always entertained a lurking sense of guilt for having faulted, reproached and boycotted Azizuddin because of his second marriage. Now was the time to make amends. No word was uttered about the past. They forgave much, if there was anything to be forgiven. In any case, Azizuddin was their elder brother, and, judged by the strength of blood ties, the true successor of Waziruddin, and therefore the elder of the elders. Everyone had known Sharfo and had few good words to say about her. Nur had a soft corner for Azizuddin for several reasons: he had loved her husband and treated him well for the ten years he had been at school in Batala, he had suffered much at Sharfo's hands, he showed much affection to Nur, and on closer acquaintance Fazl Bibi turned out to be a kind and loving sister-in-law. Her own relatives were all dead or gone away to Peshawar or from wherever they had come. She was even more forsaken than her husband. Now that she found sympathy in the family her real self emerged from the cocoon of fears and complexes of which she could not even speak to Azizuddin. She mixed well with the family, forgetting and forgiving the past.

So for a month a benign spirit ruled over the house. Everyone was an equal partner in the enjoyment. The children met their uncles and aunties, some familiar, some strangers. Family ties were strengthened. Some cousinly friendships took root. Ghulam Qadir was the centre of attention, because in a way the party was in his honour. He was such a rare visitor that his presence alone was something to be celebrated. He was a good storyteller, and everyone wanted to know about Dodhi and his job and his hobbies and interests. Living in the Urdu heartland, and having a good memory for poetry, he not only studded his narration with apposite Urdu couplets and lines but recited many complete ghazals of the classical masters. And then there was his obsession with Persian poetry, which was shared more or less by all his brothers. It was fun to listen to him. In return he was equally curious about the lives his brothers had been leading, their jobs, families, friends, opinions, ideas and future plans. They supplied him with all the information. He had not lived with his brothers since 1869-73 when he was at school in Lahore and Ghulam Nabi was studying medicine. How good it was to be together again! Oh, how good!

The most fruitful result of this reunion was the betrothal of my father and my mother. Maybe Zuhra suggested the match. Maybe Ghulam Nabi liked the shy Urdu-speaking girl. Maybe Nur loved her at first sight, as later she told her when they were together in Kabul for three years. Maybe it was a way of reintegrating Ghulam Qadir with the family. Maybe it was a mere continuation of the family tradition of marrying cousins to each other. Whatever the reason, the 18-year old Abdul Aziz was affianced to the 16-year old Zainab. There was much rejoicing. It was decided that the wedding would take place next year in Batala when Abdul Aziz was expected to finish his undergraduate studies.

All went well and exactly after one year, in march 1903, Abdul Aziz was married to Zainab. The whole clan once

again forgathered in Batala. It was the wedding of Ghulam Nabi's older son and nobody wanted to miss the event. In September 1904, after having sired a son, Abdul Aziz sailed for England to read for the bar, leaving his wife and son in the care of Zuhra, Ghulam Nabi and Nur.

OTHERS PLAN HIS FUTURE: 1904-1905

In the very year in which Abdul Aziz left for London, Providence set in motion a train of events which was to reshape the rest of Ghulam Nabi's life. Once again the course of Anglo-Afghan relations interacted with his career.

Delicate diplomatic negotiations between the Government of India and Afghanistan had started in secret in 1903 and were to culminate in the Treaty of Kabul of 21 March 1905. The Government of India was anxious to gain the sympathies of Afghanistan in its rivalry with Russia. The British were leaning as far back as possible in order not to alienate the Afghan ruler. In these days, in the middle of 1904, the Viceroy, Lord Curzon, received a letter from Amir Habibullah, saying that he required a good Persian-speaking Indian Muslim doctor to act as his personal physician. Rarely has history repeated itself so faithfully. Another Viceroy, Dufferin and Ava, had received a similar request from Amir Abdur Rahman in 1885 in an emergency and on the eve of the crucial Rawalpindi Indo-Afghan conference. Now his son, in almost identical circumstances, was making an identical request. But this time the appointment was on a permanent basis.

Among the areas of administration into which the government of India was organized the most important was the Foreign Department, which dealt with British India's relations with the native states within the Indian empire and the neighbouring foreign countries. Being a matter of the exercise of sovereignty, only the Viceroy, as the direct

representative of the King-Emperor, could deal with these affairs of state. The Foreign Department was therefore under the direct control of the Viceroy, not in the hands of any member of his Council.

Curzon marked the Amir's letter to the Foreign Secretary, Sir Louis Dane. By a coincidence Dane knew the Punjab better than any other part of the empire. He had been its Chief Secretary in 1898-1900, and later was to be its Lieutenant Governor from 1908 to 1913. At this time he was not only the Foreign Secretary but also the head of the British mission to Kabul which was negotiating a treaty of amity with Afghanistan.

Several departments of the Government of India swung into action under Dane's orders. Among the experts consulted were Sir George Roos-Keppel, the Political Agent in Khyber (later to be the Chief Commission of the North-West Frontier Province), Sir Charles Rivaz, the Lieutenant Governor of the Punjab (who had served as Commissioner of Lahore and Financial Commissioner of the Punjab between 1887 and 1897, the exact years of Ghulam Nabi's stay in Bahawalpur, and before that in the Punjab Secretariat under Sir Charles Aitchison, and had known of Aitchison's interest in Ghulam Nabi and his efforts in advancing his career by arranging to send him to Bahawalpur), the Health and Home Members of the Governor General's Council, and some senior officials of the Political Service who were familiar with the affairs of the native states.

Roos-Keppel supplied Dane's office with all intelligence reports going back to the Rawalpindi Conference of 1885, including Ghulam Nabi's brief spell of service with Amir Abdur Rahman. Before coming out to India Curzon had travelled widely in Iran and Central Asia, met their leaders, and written perceptively about them. This familiarity with the region's court life was reflected in the advice he gave to Dane. No Indian doctor, he said, however good at his job and

however well trained in his profession, would fit into a royal household until he had had some experience of attending upon the ruling class. Therefore the search for a doctor for Habibullah should begin with inquiries in the native states of India, both Muslim and non-Muslim (because some Hindu and Sikh rajas and maharajas employed Muslim hakims and doctors). It would be easier to draw up a short list once the names and records of all serving and former personal physicians to the native rulers had been prepared.

Dane saw the wisdom of the advice and acted upon it. All major or important states and all Muslim states of any size were asked to furnish the particulars of every doctor, in service or retired, who was or had been employed by the ruler as his personal physician. The Foreign Secretary's letter had the authority of the Viceroy behind it, and the states replied with exemplary promptness. Soon dozens of files arrived. Some were so detailed and voluminous that their summaries had to be made. At this time Dane was also engaged in negotiating a treaty with the government of Afghanistan and was therefore fully cognizant of the importance and delicacy of the task entrusted to him, of finding a doctor for the Amir. In spite of his heavy diplomatic work he attended to this duty in person. The information received was compiled, examined, sifted and checked. Only five or six names met the requirements of the Amir and the approval of the Foreign Secretary. After consulting the Viceroy, Dane asked for further information on these persons, including their personal details and secret files, and requested the rulers to send in their own assessments and impressions, whether complimentary or otherwise.

Every wind seemed to be blowing in favour of Ghulam Nabi. Bahawalpur had sent in his name to Dane. Sir Charles Rivaz, the Lieutenant Governor of the Punjab, had his office dig up the whole case going back to Ghulam Nabi's service at Peshawar and his resignation. After

reading what Aitchison had noted on the files he asked the Nawab of Bahawalpur for a thorough and detailed report on Ghulam Nabi's service in the state. The ruler who had employed Ghulam Nabi and whom the doctor had served for ten years had died, but his son and the new Nawab, Bahawal Khan Abbasi, who had been a school fellow with Abdul Aziz in Bahawalpur and almost a junior member of the doctor's family, sent all the relevant papers to Rivaz and appended to them a letter from himself praising Ghulam Nabi's services in glowing terms. Rivaz sent to Dane everything he had collected, adding to the file his own opinion that to all appearances Ghulam Nabi was the best candidate for the job. Dane was impressed, accepted Rivaz's opinion, and then took the case to the Viceroy.

Curzon, the ablest man ever sent out as Viceroy of India, had the gifts of reading long memoranda as if they were telegrams, absorbing the gist of the matter like a sponge, and making swift decisions. The issue was settled quickly and firmly. For form's sake Curzon sent three names to Amir Habibullah, leaving the final selection to him, but writing so strongly in favour of Ghulam Nabi as to pre-empt the choice.

When the Viceroy's letter reached Kabul in March 1905 Habibullah had just concluded a treaty with the British which was on the whole favourable to Afghanistan. He was in a happy frame of mind. Curzon's strong recommendation and Ghulam Nabi's credentials would have convinced the Amir in any case. But when he found out that Ghulam Nabi had already acted as personal physician to his late father he looked no further for any proof of his fitness. The selection was made. He wrote to Curzon, thanking him for the trouble he had taken, intimating him of his choice, and requesting him to offer the appointment to Ghulam Nabi. The Amir did not think that an interview or a personal meeting was called for. But, assuming the acceptance of the offer, he desired the

doctor to come to Kabul as soon as his travel arrangements could be completed.

Ghulam Nabi was leading a quiet, peaceful, contented retired life in Batala. All but one daughter, Sultan, had been married off. The elder son had gone to England and he missed him much. The younger was studying at the ALOE High School. Ghulam Nabi was entering his 53rd. year, and was getting used to a life of retirement. Zuhra and Nur were happy with the life they were leading. Sharfo had gone to live with one of her sons. Azizuddin and Fazl Bibi were now frequent callers, and the two brothers once again drew as close to each other as they had been in the 1860s. The married daughters visited Batala when they could. None in the family thought that at his age, with his past experiences in Peshawar and Bahawalpur, and with his natural contentment, any employment would come his way or, if one did come, he would accept it.

Ghulam Nabi knew nothing of what the fates were preparing for him. The stroke of good fortune came as a complete surprise. One morning in the early April of 1905 the servant brought from downstairs the mail of the day which included an impressive looking envelop carrying official stamps and the legend "Government of India". Ghulam Nabi opened it with much curiosity, wondering what Calcutta would have to communicate to him. When he slit the envelop open and took the paper out, he found that the letterhead bore the embossed crest of the Department of Foreign Affairs, and the letter was signed by the Foreign Secretary himself. He read the two sheets hurriedly, then again with deliberation, and a third time to grasp the details of the letter and the terms of the appointment.

Nur, who was sitting near him, was intrigued by the concentrated attention her husband was giving to this letter; but before she could open her lips he said, "Call Ammanji and Zainab here and I will answer all your unasked questions

and also give you some very good news." When Zuhra and Zainab arrived he explained to the three women the nature of the offer he had received. They were delighted. Laughingly he reminded his mother and wife how, many years ago, after the Peshawar mishap, they had asked him to write to Amir Abdur Rahman for a job and he had spurned the suggestion as a slur on his self-respect. "And now look", he concluded, "the same Amir's son, the new King, wants me as his personal physician without any effort on my part. I had no inkling of what was passing between the Viceroy and the Amir. Curzon seems to be as good a man as Aitchison was. That is how God's will works. It is His will that I go to Kabul. We will all go to Afghanistan. I will be happy to serve Amir Abdur Rahman's son." Zainab had never seen Ghulam Nabi so highly pleased. The women gave their emphatic approval to his decision and were relieved that they didn't have to persuade him.

As the Amir wanted him to report for duty as quickly as possible and the family agreed on the move, Ghulam Nabi sent one telegram to Calcutta accepting the offer and another to Kabul saying that he and his family required two weeks to complete all preparations for the journey. The replies came without delay. Dane thanked him for agreeing to go to Kabul, and informed him that the Government of India would make all arrangements for the family's travel up to the Indian frontier. The Amir's Mir Munshi wrote back, welcoming him to Kabul and granting him the two weeks' joining time he had asked for.

The terms and conditions offered by the King were generous. The doctor would receive a salary of 800 British Indian rupees (the Afghani rupee was far lower in value); this would increase every year by up to one hundred rupees, depending upon the quality of his performance and the discretion of the Amir. The state would provide furnished accommodation and also meet all the daily

requirements of the household. The family could travel to Batala once a year at official expense. The national exchequer would supply six suits of courtly uniform every year for the doctor (three for summer, three for winter), eight servants to run the house, and a carriage for the use of the doctor and his family. No limit was put on the tenure of the appointment; it would be held at the Amir's pleasure, literally. The doctor was granted the honorary rank of Brigadier General in the Afghan army.

There was a flurry in the Batala house. Scores of things had to be done and done quickly. Three small families were living in the haveli. They were assured that the move would not affect them in any way. Four servants, tried and dependable, were to be left behind to look after the security and cleanliness of the haveli. Another four, who were unmarried or were prepared to leave their families behind, were told to get ready to go to Kabul. The women decided what to take with them and what to leave behind, and supervised the packing of both lots. Messengers were sent out to the places across the river and around Batala carrying the news of the family's imminent departure for foreign parts. Many of the clan came to say farewell; so did some old friends from Kahnuwan.

The travel arrangements made by the Government of India were princely. A special train, more commodious and luxurious than the one the Nawab of Bahawalpur had sent in 1887, arrived at the Batala railway station. Nearly half the male adult population of the town turned up at the railway station to say goodbye and wish a safe journey. This was late April or early May of 1905.

The train wended its way to Amritsar, then to Lahore, then to Rawalpindi, and then to Peshawar. The first Chief Commissioner of the North-West Frontier Province (created on 9 November 1901), H.A.Deane, received Ghulam Nabi at the Peshawar station, where the family was served a

luncheon sent from the Government House. As a matter of courtesy Deane travelled with the doctor up to Jamrud where the railway line ended. The rest of the journey in India was made in dak-ghurries, and from there to Kabul, with an overnight stay in Jalalabad, by special carriages dispatched from Kabul by the Afghan government.

LIFE AT THE COURT OF AFGHANISTAN: 1905-1917

The family reached Kabul in the afternoon and installed itself in the house allotted to it near Balahissar (the High Fort), close to the Dilkusha Palace, the residence of the Amir. The house was too big for the family, and nearly half of it was only used when Ghulam Nabi's married daughters visited with their families, which was rare because the family spent all its winters in Batala.

My mother, Zainab, had been asked by Zuhra and Nur whether she wanted to go to Dodhi to be with her parents for as long as Abdul Aziz was in England or to come to Kabul with them. The 19-year old bride found it hard to choose. Ghulam Nabi decided for her, saying that Abdul Aziz had left her in his keeping and she must accompany them to Kabul, though she would be free to visit Dodhi whenever she wanted to. Long afterwards, when Zuhra, Ghulam Nabi, Nur and all of those generations (except Ghulam Muhammad) had been dead for years and I was a young man, my mother told me that she had never stopped blessing Ghulam Nabi for taking her to Kabul. What a magnificent and unforgettable experience she would have missed had she gone to Dodhi.

The family lived in Kabul in great dignity and luxury as befitted Ghulam Nabi's status. Zuhra and Nur had had some taste of living near the ruling family in Bahawalpur, but for Zainab it was a new and so thrilling an experience that every

little detail of what took place and how it affected her was etched on her mind and 32 years later she related the glad happenings to me as if all that was yesterday's story. I myself am so happy that she went to Kabul for another reason. Most of my information about the family's life there comes from what she saw and related to me, and in part from what Zuhra and Nur told her after she left Kabul in 1908 and she remembered and passed on to me. Without this authentic and first hand source I could not have written the pages that follow.

So munificent and bountiful were the conveniences and comforts provided free by the Afghan government that Ghulam Nabi's personal expenses were confined to what he spent on the upkeep of the Batala houses, monthly allowances to his married daughters, pensions to the Kahnuwan retainers, salaries of the servants he had brought from Batala, the school and later college expenses of his younger son's education, and the monthly allowance sent to Abdul Aziz in London for his fees and living. The total of all this amounted to a small portion of his private income. In Kabul the royal establishment supplied everything from foodstuff, flour, ghee, fruits and vegetables to kerosene oil and candles, and the services of a coach driver, a washerman, a water carrier, a handyman and six chowkidars. The salary was virtually a gift, and only rarely was any part of it used. To all this must be added the several perks, privileges and presents far richer than what Ghulam Nabi had received in Bahawalpur.

King Habibullah (1872-1919) was the son of Amir Abdur Rahman and of the concubine Gulréz who came from the Wakhan region. On the whole he adopted a pro-British policy, paid several visits to India, and asked for and accepted British arbitration on the question of the frontier with Iran (the Macmahon Mission of 1902-03). By the March 1905 treaty he confirmed the agreement entered into by his father and Sir Henry Mortimer Durand in 1893; Great Britain pledged itself to guarantee Afghan independence so

long as the King's actions, in his relations with other powers, conformed with the advice given by the British Government; accepted an annual subsidy of £160,000 from the British; and enjoyed the freedom, without any limitations, to import war materials. An Afghan political agent was appointed at the court of the Viceroy of India, and Afghan commercial agents were stationed in India and Great Britain. The King agreed to the appointment of an Anglo-Indian political agent in Kabul chosen by himself from among Muslims proposed by the Indian Foreign Office.

Habibullah was 33 when Ghulam Nabi joined his personal staff, and exactly 20 years younger than his doctor. Ghulam Nabi looked younger than his age, and both men wore beards. Judged by their contemporary photographs they bear a remarkable resemblance. The Amir liked his Indian doctor and was kind and generous to him. Their relations became as friendly as it was possible between a commoner and a king. The Amir was always addressed as Álá Hazrat and referred to as such in his absence; his senior most wife as Ulya Hazrat, and the second wife as Ulya Janab.

The Amir watched Ghulam Nabi's work and behaviour for several months. Then one day, towards the end of 1905, he summoned the doctor into his presence and the following conversation took place.

"I have been monitoring your work", said the Amir. "I feel the responsibility of looking after the entire royal family is too great a burden for one man. It is my wish that you attend exclusively on me as my personal physician. Besides, whenever I go on tours you have to accompany me and that leaves the harem without a doctor. As you know I have a large harem and it would be better if another doctor takes charge of the ladies and the children."

"As you desire, Álá Hazrat", said Ghulam Nabi.

"But if your duties are going to be bifurcated I need your help. I am not impressed with the quality of the doctors

available in this country. That is why I asked the Viceroy of India to find me one. I got you and I am happy. But the process took nearly one year. The British are thorough, which is good, but that takes time. I can't wait."

"But, Sire, how can I be of service to you in this matter?" inquired Ghulam Nabi.

"Look. Listen to me", the King explained. "You were educated in India and have served at several places. You must have contacts in the profession. Make inquiries. Write to your friends and former colleagues. Find me a doctor for my family. But remember one thing and never, never, let it leave your mind. We are a conservative society, and we rate the honour and reputation of a woman most highly. The slightest sliver of suspicion, however unjustified, will not only sully and tarnish her name in the eyes of everyone but create an explosive situation. This code applies even more strictly to the royal ladies. My trust in you is complete. That is why I am entrusting you with this mission. Choose a doctor, but choose well. I want a man as dependable, upstanding, stirling and impeccable as you are. And, you will be responsible for whatever he does."

While the King was speaking Ghulam Nabi's mind was racing to find a solution of the problem. How heavy is the burden the Amir is laying on me, he thought. The implications were enormous. What was at stake was not only his own living, honour, reputation and career but his very life – and also of whoever he would recommend. The Afghans were unforgiving in these matters. Where, for heaven's sake, where could he find a doctor for whose good conduct he could pledge himself? Suddenly his mind stopped groping. The answer to the problem came suddenly, like a flash of revelation. Ghulam Muhammad. His own brother, the blood of his blood, his *alter ego*, his own personality in another body.

The King misread Ghulam Nabi's pause and thought that he was trying to phrase a suitable negative response.

"Will you disappoint me, Ghulam Nabi?" the Amir asked. It was the first time that he had addressed the doctor without his title. Was this lapse an index of his anxiety? Or, was he trying to be informal in order to strengthen the force of his appeal? Ghulam Nabi wondered.

"No, Sire, I will not disappoint you. But you make me a surety for the character of the man I recommend. My back is not broad enough for such a heavy responsibility. But, as I have said, I will not disappoint you. I know only one man in this whole wide world whom I deem fit to perform the duties you have in mind."

"Who is he? Where is he?", the interruption betrayed royal relief.

"He is my brother, Sire. My youngest brother. He is junior to me by ten years. I have loved him since he was born. After my father died I brought him up like a son, educated him, kept him by my side for many years. I have tried to mould him in my image. His name is Ghulam Muhammad. He went to the same medical school as I, and has the same qualification. He is in private medical practice in Amritsar. I will not make any inquiries or waste time in further search. I can only offer you Ghulam Muhammad. For him and for him alone, and for nobody else, can I stand guarantee and submit that if he does anything wrong you may send me to the gallows."

Habibullah espied a ray of hope in Ghulam Nabi's words. He relaxed.

"I am sure there will be no occasion to hang you", he said amiably. "I repeat that I trust you implicitly. I think you have made the right choice. Find out how soon he can come here. I want him immediately."

"He will come as soon as possible, Sire. I will write to him today."

"No. Send a special courier from the palace. Give him your letter and ask him to bring back the reply with the utmost speed."

"It will be done today without delay."

The Amir made to rise from his seat as a signal that the meeting was over. Ghulam Nabi stood up but did not bow as was the protocol on leaving the royal presence. The Amir settled back in his chair.

"Yes? You have something else to say? Sit down."

"Thank you. Sire, with your permission I wish to talk about the terms and conditions of the service of Ghulam Muhammad."

"There is no need for that. His terms will be the same as yours, with only one minor difference. You carry the rank of a Brigadier General. His will be that of a full Colonel."

"I have a very special request to make. I shall be grateful, Sire, if you fix my brother's salary at one thousand rupees. He . . .".

"But you are senior to him in age, experience, status and rank. Have you any sound reasons for your request?"

"Yes, Sire, I have. His needs are greater than mine and his private resources less. I have already married off six of my daughters and one son, leaving only two children unwedded. Ghulam Muhammad has three children, the oldest is only six years old, and probably more will arrive. His family responsibilities have just begun, I have discharged most of mine. He needs and deserves a better deal. If you prefer, you can postpone your decision on my entreaty till you have judged the quality of his work and his conduct.

A smile touched Habibullah's lips.

"I admire your loyalty to your brother and your solicitude for his welfare. I trust your word and appreciate your sentiment. I won't wait till he has taken up his duties. I accept your request. His salary is fixed at one thousand British Indian rupees. Does that satisfy you?"

"Eminently, Sire. May God bless you and your family for granting me this favour."

The meeting was over. Ghulam Nabi walked to his office, sat down at his desk, and wrote a detailed letter to his brother, outlining the terms and conditions of the offer, describing life in Kabul, and at the end urging him not to miss this rare opportunity and come to Kabul without delay. A royal military courier was summoned, told of the King's orders, and given the letter. He left for Amritsar the same evening in a vehicle supplied by the army headquarters. Ghulam Nabi went home and gave the good news to Zuhra and Nur. Zuhra's happiness was beyond description. Another of his sons, the youngest darling, would be here with her. Nur was like a second mother or an elder sister to Ghulam Muhammad and loved her much. She too was delighted. Zainab did not know Ghulam Muhammad well; there had been little time for that. But she welcomed the presence of another family in the city. There would be at least one house to visit.

Ghulam Muhammad accepted the offer and was in Kabul with his family in less than three weeks.

I have described the background of Ghulam Muhammad's appointment in some detail because with it began a long, close, significant and even historical relationship between my family and the land of Afghanistan, which was destined to cast a long shadow on Afghan history, determine the future of the country, and save it from anarchy and disintegration, at least for a few decades; and in the process make my family rich and even more honoured, and a part of the history of Afghanistan. But that story I will tell later at its proper place.

The arrival of the two doctor brothers in Kabul coincided with Afghanistan's drive towards modernization. The two men played not a minor role in facilitating the reforms. Therefore I will describe briefly the conditions obtaining in the country between 1905 and 1919.

At his coronation King Habibullah Khan had promised his people that he would strive to strengthen national unity, bring

about reforms in society and government, and repel any foreign aggression.

Afghanistan was divided into six provinces: Kabul, Kandhar, Herat, Farah, Afghan Turkistan, and Badakhshan (which included Wakhan). The King himself administered the Kabul province and city. Priority was given to military reforms. Modern weapons were introduced. The scope of military instruction was broadened. For the first time in 1904-06 a Royal Military College was founded to train an officer corps; Ghulam Nabi lectured there in his spare time. The pay of the soldiers was increased. To attain military self-sufficiency state-owned workshops were improved to meet the basic needs of the armed forces.

Habibullah was the founder of modern education in the country. In 1904 he established the Habibiya College, the first secondary school for boys in the country. Gradually most of the modern subjects were introduced. Languages were not ignored, and special attention was paid to Pashto, English, Turkish and Urdu. For two years Ghulam Nabi, on the King's orders, taught Urdu at the college. On the King's personal and express instructions the first public library was established. The cost of running the college was met by the royal treasury. Between 1904 and 1919 the state spent over two million rupees on education. The majority of the teachers of the college were Indian Muslims, and most of them had been educated in Lahore and Aligarh.

The traditional Islamic system of education continued to exist parallel with the modern, but by bringing education under stringent government control, the majority of the mullahs were turned into salaried employees of the state. This proved to be a wise and farsighted step. Many mullahs found it to their advantage to support the King's political and administrative policies. In his earlier years Habibullah tried hard to convince the traditionalists and conservatives that Islam and modern education were not incompatible. In

many ways, in education he echoed the ideas and enthusiasm of Sir Sayyid Ahmad Khan. Ghulam Nabi, himself a great admirer of the Sayyid and his movement, arranged for all his writings to be obtained and submitted to the King. In his conversations with the Amir he often tried to persuade him to become the Sayyid of Afghanistan by introducing Western education and science. He succeeded to a great extent, as is clear from the speeches on the subject made by Habibullah during his Indian visit in 1907.

On the occasion of laying the foundation stone of the Habibiya Hall at the Islamia College, Lahore, he said:

"O my Muslim brethren, endeavour to acquire knowledge, so that you may not wear the clothes of ignorance. It is your duty to acquire knowledge. After your children have thoroughly acquainted themselves with the principles and laws of the faith of Muhammad, turn their attention towards the requirement of the new sciences, as unless you acquire Western knowledge, you will remain without bread."

On another occasion he said:

"In a single sentence, I give you my whole exhortation. Acquire knowledge . . . . There are those who utter solemn warnings in your ears, who urge that Muhammdans have nothing to do with modern philosophy, who declaim against Western sciences as though they were evil. I am not among them. I am not among those who ask you to shut your ears and your eyes. On the contrary, I say pursue knowledge wherever it is to be found."

Choosing an appropriate platform to propagate his views he told the students of the Aligarh college:

"Let anyone who nevertheless still honestly thinks that religion and education are mutually antagonistic, and that religion must decline where education flourishes, come to this college, as I have come, and see for himself, as I have seen, what education is doing for the religious beliefs of the rising

generation. There is, I am told, a violent prejudice among many Indian Muhammadans against that particular kind of education which we call European education. What folly is this! Listen to me. I stand here as the advocate of Western learning. So far from thinking it an evil, I have founded in Afghanistan a college called Habibiya College after my own name where European education is to be given as far as possible on European lines. What I do insist on, however, is that religious education is the foundation on which all other forms of education must rest.

If you cut away the foundations the superstructure will surely topple over. I say to you therefore, be ever careful to make the religious training of the students your first and foremost care. The all-essential condition I have imposed upon my college in Afghanistan, and I hope it will ever be strictly maintained there. But subject to this condition, I say again that I am a sincere friend and well-wisher of Western education."

Painfully conscious of the poor quality of education in the country Habibullah made elaborate plans to send a number of Afghan students to Europe. On his orders Ghulam Nabi asked his son, Abdul Aziz, who was then studying in England, to collect as much published information as he could on British universities and centres of technical training and send it to the court. Unfortunately the scheme had to be abandoned first by the opposition of the conservatives at home and later by the outbreak of the first World War. The King was particularly interested in sending abroad selected graduates of the Habibiya College to be trained in medicine and engineering. The scheme was revived in 1917 in co-operation with some American universities, but his assassination in February 1919 and the resulting political uncertainty put an end to it.

Incidentally, an amusing incident is recorded relating to his Indian visit of February 1907 which is worth recalling. He was due to attend a court held in his honour. British bands were to play the Afghan National Anthem. General

Kitchener, the Commander-in-Chief of India, was told that nobody could discover what the tune was, and the military bandmasters were much distressed. The military mind of Kitchener, arrogant and used to making rapid decisions, produced this order: "Play two or three bars of something heavy, pompous and slow, and let it go at that." A march from one of the older German operas was chosen and played on the entry of the Afghan monarch, and also whenever he appeared on his tour of important Indian cities.

According to *The New York Times*, the anthem tune was played with so much success that the newspapers of Bombay, Madras and other cities visited by the Amir published columns about the "weirdly beautiful strains of the Afghan National Anthem". The diary kept by the visiting Afghan party recorded: "The English Franks are addicted to a certain tune, which is played on the slightest pretext, by musicians who have adopted the style and manner of the ancient Turkish military bands. The sound resembles the shrieking of she-camels. They constantly inquire whether it pleases us, soliciting approval."

Touché!

Along with education, Habibullah took several steps to improve public health, and in this task Ghulam Nabi drew most of the plans. A pipeline was laid from Paghman to Kabul to bring potable water to the capital. After two cholera epidemics the government decided to take over responsibility for public health. As an initial step a municipal administration was set up to undertake the daily cleaning of the roads and streets of Kabul. In 1913 the first state hospital was established, located in Kabul, in the planning of which Ghulam Nabi's expertise in setting up the Bahawalpur hospital was utilized. Most of the attendants at the new establishment were Indians with a small senior Turkish staff. There were 30 beds, a public dispensary and a pharmacy. Both Ghulam Nabi and Ghulam Muhammad worked in the

hospital in their spare time. (Ghulam Nabi asked his nephew and son-in-law, Muhammad Husain, who was a compounder in Bahawalpur, to resign and come and join the new hospital; at the same time, Ali Muhammad and one distant cousin from Mukerian were given jobs in Kabul). It was a small beginning and grossly inadequate for the needs of the country, yet it provided an essential service. Thousands of patients were treated every year and nearly one hundred major surgical operations were performed. Smallpox was endemic, and a vaccine against it was prepared and thousands of children in Kabul and Herat were inoculated.

Among other improvements and innovations were a hydroelectric plant, a textile mill in Kabul, and a dam at Ghazni. Trade, defence and the conveniences of travelling dictated the construction of roads. Many towns and regions were connected with Kabul and with each other. Two principal routes led out to Peshawar and Quetta. Modern iron bridges were constructed where needed.

The improved road network was then put to a good use by providing local, national and international means of transport. In Kabul and other major cities *tongas* and *tumtums* were made available for hire; sometimes they were even used for travel to India. The Afghan Motor Transport Company was established, and its small fleet of three or four automobiles ostensibly ran services between Kabul and India for the purpose of hauling trade freight both ways. In actual practice it was chiefly utilized by the King's household. The Khyber pass was open only twice a week, and on the average it took about ten days to travel between Kabul and Peshawar.

The postal system was very poorly organized. All letters and parcels from abroad first went to an Afghan postmaster in Peshawar who then forwarded them to Kabul, causing long delays. However, the King's mail was carried regularly from India to Kabul as expeditiously as possible. In 1908 a telephone connection was established between

Kabul and the King's winter residence in Jalalabad, but its use was generally reserved for the private convenience of the Amir and his personal staff.

In 1905 Habibullah imported the first automobile into the country for his private use. It was a Rolls Royce and he was fond of driving between Kabul and Jalalabad and Kabul and Paghman for his pleasure. The rule was that if the King planned to be away from the capital for more than twenty-four hours his personal physician accompanied him. Thus Ghulam Nabi became the first in my family to ride a motor car, and that too a custom-built Rolls Royce.

Habibullah's reforms extended to the improvement or revival of international trade. Commerce between India and Afghanistan increased in volume; it was reopened with Bukhara, and made normal with Russian Central Asia. Afghanistan imported from Russia chintzes, glassware, sugar, linen, silk, cotton goods, crockery, cutlery and paper; and exported to her mainly wool and karakul sheepskin. From India she imported cotton goods, dyes, sugar, tea, iron, knives. scissors, needles, thread, paper, drugs, machinery, and used English uniforms of every kind and description for use in winter. Tea and sugar were the largest imports and their volume increased almost every year. Exports to India included fruits, vegetables, grain, pulses, wool, ghee, tobacco, carpets and horses.

Some significant social changes were set afoot. Expenditure on marriages was curtailed by law on a sliding scale. Commoners could spend Rs. 100 to 150, tribal chieftains, feudal lords and sardars up to Rs. 1,500, and members of the royal family up to Rs. 5,000. Keeping more than four wives at a time was outlawed. Habibullah himself set an example by divorcing all but four of his wives. The practiće of keeping concubines and female slaves was banned.

Several important and unprecedented steps were taken to improve the dismal Afghan record in the field of human

rights. Anti-slavery laws were revised and strengthened and were effectively enforced. Torture of prisoners was proscribed. The most horrible dungeon in the country, the *siah-chah* (black well), was closed, and a relatively modern jail was built in Kabul. Some traditional harsh punishments, like amputation of hands, pulling out of tongues and blinding, were abolished.

Many Western innovations and inventions were encouraged to invade Afghan society. Habibullah himself patronized the use of Western dress. The armed forces personnel wore tunics and coats which were first patterned on English styles and then on Turkish uniforms. The officer corps and the court officials wore clothes of an English cut. The ordinary people were persuaded to wear astrakhan caps instead of turbans. The King became a great enthusiast of golf and played a daily round for several years. For this purpose he had links laid out in both Kabul and Jalalabad.

The first cinematographic equipment arrived in the country. Traffic policemen were posted in Kabul. The King became a photography enthusiast and personally trained various Afghans in the use of cameras. Phonographs and fountain pens were imported. Dozens of European words and terms entered the Persian and Pashto vocabulary through the Iranian Persian, Urdu and Turkish. The royal palaces followed Anglo-Indian architectural styles, and were furnished in the European fashion. The King's interest encompassed European eating habits. He specially liked English jams and jellies, and occasionally even European cuisine. For some years he had a French cook on his staff.

Foundations were being laid for the revolutionary modernization of King Amanullah

Judged by the standards of today all these reforms do not amount to much. But this is a wrong way to view them. Historical events should be evaluated in the context of their time. Hindsight distorts history and vitiates our understanding

of it. We must keep in mind that Habibullah had hardly any precedents to follow. Both Mustafa Kamal Ataturk of Turkey and Raza Shah Kabir of Iran came nearly two decades after him. He was aware of the Ottoman Empire's efforts to modernize its military and educational systems, and on the intellectual plane the ideas and activities of certain Indian Muslims like Sayyid Ahmad Khan and Sayyid Ameer Ali. But given Afghanistan's geographical isolation, political instability, social backwardness, the reactionary views of its warlords, and the immediate example of Amir Abdur Rahman's medieval absolutism, Habibullah's personal efforts to pull the country into the modern age fall somewhere between an achievement and a miracle.

He had no great triumphs prior to him to inspire him, as the Ottomans had. He had no great civilization and culture to serve as an ideal or model, as the Iranians and the Egyptians had. He had no Western mentors to goad him into embracing modernity, as the Indian Muslims had. Whatever he did was his own personal feat. He was a pioneer in the true sense of the word. He grew a rose in a howling wilderness. His enterprising and charming son and successor tried to plant a rose-garden, but the fates were against him.

It is difficult for me to judge how far the Afghan people changed their way of life as a result of these reforms. What I know is that my family's private and social habits underwent a revolution under the impact of Habibullah's innovations and example. Being nearer to the throne than even most of the courtiers and generals, Ghulam Nabi served as a conduit of great change in his family. The greatest impact was in the cuisine. As a part of the royal establishment, several imported supplies were passed on to him, many Western eatables and eating implements entered his household. Marmalades, jams and jellies arrived on the breakfast table. Forks and knives came into use, though in the beginning the women found it hard to handle them.

New crockery was introduced, and both the servants and the ladies had to learn the connection between a particular piece of it and the food which had to be served or consumed in it. Bahawalpur had taught them much, but it was a backwater and now twenty years behind the family. Kabul was a new world and a new culture.

Ghulam Nabi bought a camera and introduced a passion for photography in the family, which luckily my father inherited. The doctor learned how to play golf. At times some European dishes prepared in the royal kitchen by the French chef were sent to the doctor's house by Ulya Hazrat. The family gradually made it a habit to have all its meals in the dining room, served by bearers who had to be properly trained. Napkins came into use. Framed photographs and paintings were hung on the walls of the rooms. Cakes appeared with the afternoon tea. A few English journals and illustrated magazines entered the house, and all looked at the photographs with wonder and asked Zainab to translate what was written beneath them. The first fountain pen was used by Ghulam Nabi, and then it became the standard writing implement in the house. A film show was arranged at the palace and all the women were invited to it, where what they saw on the screen struck them dumb. Nur and Zainab started wearing white court shoes. In short, the family was Westernizing itself and becoming modern at great speed.

Ghulam Nabi and Ghulam Muhammad lived in two houses which lay adjacent to each other. Soon after the latter's arrival the wall between the back courtyards of the two houses was pierced and a wide door set in it to enable the two families to visit each other without leaving their houses. In practice it made one household out of two homes. Privacy remained intact but social interaction increased.

When Ghulam Muhammad arrived in Kabul he already had two daughters aged 7 and 2 and one son aged 5. During his stay he had two more daughters and one son. All of them

were born in Amritsar. Ghulam Nabi's household consisted of his mother, wife, Wazir, Zainab and Sultan. In both houses the number of members was manageable, the work to be done not much, the servants many. The two brothers did not have long or heavy hours of duty. They presented themselves at the palace after an early breakfast, stayed there till lunch time, came home for the midday meal, and then visited the palace only when summoned. Occasionally Ghulam Nabi was asked by the King to lunch with him. Some afternoons were spent in the hospital in advising the management, seeing some influential patients, and occasionally helping in surgery if the case was complicated or serious. This was the general routine. But, of course, there were days when the King was touring the country and Ghulam Nabi had to travel with him; or the King felt unwell and preferred to keep the doctor within call. Ghulam Muhammad had roughly the same workload, except that the harem rarely left the capital. There were no weekly holidays or other breaks for the doctors.

The women had hardly anything to do inside the house in the way of domestic chores (the round dozen of servants saw to that), and they could not go out because there was no place to go to. There was virtually no social life for them in Kabul. The two doctors' status proved a barrier to mixing with the Afghan middle class society. The hindrance was not so much a result of the Punjabis' arrogance or feeling of superiority as of the current conventions ruling the social life. The Afghan society was rigidly class conscious. A few among the Afghan nobility cultivated the royal doctors, partly because of the values held in common and partly because of their wish to have men with easy access to the King on their side. The most prominent of these was General Nadir Khan, the future king of the country. On the family level this interaction was limited to five or six times a year when the women attended or hosted a dinner for the ladies of one or two generals and other courtiers. In this matter

Ghulam Muhammad and his family enjoyed an advantage over Ghulam Nabi and his women.

Ghulam Nabi had moulded Ghulam Muhammad in his image, but the result was not a replica. Ghulam Muhammad took after his brother in ability, hard work, integrity and a high sense of responsibility. He also had the skills of a good physician. But the parallel stopped there.

The circumstances of Ghulam Nabi's early life had made him a precocious child, matured him at a very young age, imparted reticence and reserve to his conduct and behaviour, and made him an introvert. Ghulam Muhammad had had a very different kind of life. Though he had lived with or under the shadow of Ghulam Nabi for most of his life, he had not been called upon to bear his own burdens and of the others, something to which his elder brother had been forced to submit when his years were still tender. Ghulam Muhammad's existence had been of relative calm and quiet. He had learnt much from Ghulam Nabi and made it a part of his character. One of these gifts was discipline. But, unlike Ghulam Nabi, he had not let himself become predominantly concerned with his own thoughts and feelings rather than with external things. Ghulam Nabi was a shy, inwardly thoughtful person. Ghulam Muhammad was an extrovert. He was pre-eminently concerned with the world lying around him. He was an outgoing, gregarious, sociable person. He made friends easily. He played games with the women of the family, particularly chess and *chchikri* (a kind of a dice game in which dice are replaced by cowries). He laughed a lot. He knew many jokes and had the good sense to tell them on appropriate occasions and with verve. He had a finely tuned sense of humour. He smiled readily. He laughed both with others and at himself.

This made Ghulam Muhammad's social life busy and more varied. He kept the royal ladies happy with his sunny temperament. They talked about him to the wives and

daughters of the nobles. They liked his eldest son to play with the royal princes. The news spread that Ghulam Muhammad was a likeable, civilized, respectable and trustworthy gentleman who was worth cultivating. Ghulam Nabi served the King with devotion, ability and loyalty, and won his confidence. The King relied upon him without reserve, respected his character, and rewarded him with as much friendship as a king could bestow upon a commoner. But Ghulam Muhammad remained a good mixer and an important member of a small elite which met and dined and gossiped regularly. Ghulam Nabi saw all this and was happy that Ghulam Muhammad was enjoying his life without breaking the strict Afghan code of social intercourse.

Confined within the house and with nothing to do, how did the women pass their time? Eating dry fruit to their fill, drinking tea, playing chess, and talking. What did they talk about hour after hour? What topics did they find so engrossing? The answer, to my great luck, is the history and tradition of the family. I say "to my great luck" because most of what I have written above and will write in the following pages of the family's origins and history was what my mother heard from her mother-in-law (Nur) and her mother-in-law's mother-in-law (Zuhra), and occasionally from Ghulam Nabi and Ghulam Muhammad when the two families sat together after dinner, sipping *qahva*, guzzling *chalghozas* and pistachios, and remembering the past times.

Living so far away from home might have driven them to relive their lives. Talking about what one misses in order to recapture what has vanished provides an essential psychological compensation for the loss one feels. But another, even more powerful, force was the family tradition of passing on its history to the next generation. The general practice of mothers telling bedtime stories to their children was, in my family, supplanted by the tradition of parents telling their young and not so young children stories of their

elders, highlighting the importance of certain events and incidents and characters and eccentricities of the elders. This knowledge was transmitted from one generation to the next. Thus nothing was lost, and a great deal of the legacy preserved. While other children heard from their parents tales of lovely fairies, charming princes, kindly giants, speaking animals, flying carpets and messengers, and lions and tigers and elephants, I heard of my own past and its makers.

My mother, though a daughter of Ghulam Nabi's younger brother and now married to his own elder son, was a stranger to the family. The same blood flowed in her veins, but she knew so little about the background of her paternal elders. There were reasons for that. Her father, Ghulam Qadir, had not told her much because he had spent his early years in Lahore with Ghulam Nabi and had been denied any long association with his parents. My mother's mother belonged to a collateral branch and could not have had much information to give her daughter. Abdul Aziz had left Zainab soon after their marriage and gone to England. When Ghulam Nabi decided that Zainab should come with him and live in Kabul instead of going to her parents in Dodhi an important consideration in his mind might have been that her stay in Kabul with his family would help her integrate with her husband's family, learn its history and traditions, and thus be psychologically ready to live with Abdul Aziz after his return from London.

Ghulam Nabi's household in Kabul was, except for himself, an exclusively female domain. There was his mother, Zuhra, his wife, Nur, his daughter, Wazir, who had separated from her husband in 1888, his youngest daughter, Sultan, and his daughter-in-law, Zainab. Zainab was then only 20, a young bride living amidst her in-laws, but her father-in-law was also her paternal uncle. Ghulam Nabi was absent from home for most of the day, and he went to bed early. So the talking was left to its best practitioners, the women.

Almost every day, briefly and in snatches during the daylight hours and fully and in long narration in the post-dinner session, Zuhra and Nur talked eagerly and vivaciously of what they had heard from their elders and seen themselves. As Zainab showed a keen interest in the talk and asked many questions, the two elderly women spun the story even finer to satisfy an avid audience.

Zuhra spoke of the days of yore, of the Kahnuwan *chchamb* and an emperor's hunt and illness, of the cousins across the Beas, of births and deaths and marriages, of her husband who was dead and yet so alive in her mind and heart, of Sharfo and her cruelty to her own husband and Ghulam Nabi, of her sad departure from Kahnuwan, of her sons, and so many other things. Nur prompted her when the story was on the point of running into minor or unimportant byways. When Zuhra was exhausted (she was getting on in years now), Nur took up the tale. She had her own experiences and wonders to relate, her own comments to make, her own ideas about how to judge men and events to convey. Zainab sat spellbound, hearing the story of her own family for the first time, thrilled by the ebb and flow of the stream of time, the doings of men, the power of women over men, the places where these men and women had made their homes and then abandoned it, above all of the texture and size of the family network which defined every member's past and present, gave him or her an individuality which, by a paradox, evolved and flourished the better because of the plurality provided by the larger whole.

Over thirty-two years later, when I was not yet thirteen years of age, my mother told me that these sessions with the two older women did her much good. She felt that she was being trained in the art of establishing different but appropriate kinds of relationships with the various members of the extended family. Most of all she came to know much about her husband with whom she had lived a

mere eighteen months before he had gone away. Now that she came to think of it, she realized that he was still a stranger to her until Zuhra and Nur began to paint a picture of him for her benefit. Now when he would return he would not be an alien, misty, elusive and uncharted figure.

These talks also inculcated in her the values the family had upheld for generations and expected her to continue to uphold as a daughter-in-law, as a wife, and as a mother of the next generation. These conversations also provided her with considerable amusement. Of all the stories she heard the most exhilarating was of Zuhra's shopping in the Anarkali bazaar of Lahore in 1868, and the most moving of Ghulam Nabi's school-days in Batala.

In 1940 when my mother told me, with excitement in her voice, of Zuhra's extravagant shopping in Anarkali, I said, "But Amman, you did not realize then in Kabul that when you were hearing this story your husband was shopping in Piccadilly and Regent Street in London."

"How could I have known, my love. I had not even heard these names", she interrupted me.

"And then, Amman, you yourself made it a routine to make your purchases in Anarkali when Abbaji was living in Lahore in the 1916-18. And more was to come. In the 1930s you lived on Lawrence Road, a bare five minutes walk from the Mall, and shopped there."

"You are right. How things change with time. God alone knows the future. There is much wisdom in that. You shouldn't forget this."

Going back to what was happening in Kabul, these lessons in family history and legacy continued and Zainab stored in her memory and mind a rich collection of stories and their main characters. She was there for only three years but reaped a splendid harvest of knowledge. This was later supplemented by what her husband and others told her. Inquisitive by nature and proud of her family, with the

passing of years she became the repository of all that was worth recalling of this lore. I am glad that I spent the first twenty years of my life with her. This gave me an opportunity to hear much from her and, with the coming of the first glimmers of understanding, to appreciate and remember what I heard. But for her, and in a smaller part for my father, this account of the people whose genes have made me what I am could never have been written.

The family did not live in Kabul all the year round. The harsh winter of the region demanded that it moved to Batala for the six cold months. The King, with his family and court, and the administrative offices, shifted to the winter capital in the south, Jalalabad. Ghulam Nabi and Ghulam Muhammad had to accompany the royalty. Their families spent the winters in the Punjab. Ghulam Muhammad's family and children went to Amritsar, to which his wife belonged; occasionally they visited Batala. Ghulam Nabi's family spent the entire season in Batala. Everybody looked forward to this seasonal migration.

The family indulged itself in Batala to no end. There were reunions, guests from all quarters, marriages to attend, and relatives and friends in the town and the neighbouring villages to be visited. Zainab went away to Dodhi for a couple of months. Azizuddin and Fazl Bibi came every day to see Zuhra and Nur. When the fancy moved them, Zuhra and Nur, accompanied by Zainab if she was not away in Dodhi, went to Kahnuwan to see their old friends, look at what was once their own, and pray at the graves of the departed elders.

For the relatives living in Batala and its vicinity the visit brought a memorable bounty. In Kabul one of the perks of Ghulam Nabi's job was the receipt of one 20-sér bag of dry fruit every month, which the family, visitors and servants consumed. But in October, on the eve of its departure for Batala, the family received six bags (the

winter quota) in advance. When, in the first year a portion of the contents of these bags was distributed among relatives and friends in Batala, Zuhra and Nur were surprised to find how much the gift was appreciated. In the following year they bought another six bags in Kabul to please more of the Batalavis. Some one carried the news of the purchase to the Afghan Minister of Palace Affairs, who immediately ordered the doubling of Ghulam Nabi's quota of dry fruit. In the years to follow the hunger of the Batalavis for this delicacy was fully satisfied by Afghan generosity. In the next ten years everyone on the haveli's visiting list received an ample share. Azizuddin's share was increased from a portion to a full bag ; Fazl Bibi, being a Pathan, was particularly pleased. On Abdul Aziz's return to India Ghulam Nabi made it a point to send one bag to him wherever he was living.

When I went to live in Batala in 1937 I found a large wooden box full of several dozen empty bags made of a strong off-white double cloth with the Afghan court of arms and some Persian language inscription on them. My curiosity was aroused and I asked Amman about them. She told me that they were the bags in which dry fruit was brought from Kabul in 1906-17 for distribution among the people of Batala, and added the story I have related above about the doubling of the quota. On my inquiry she said that the dry fruit consisted of almonds, pine nuts (*chalghozas*), sultanas walnuts and dried apricots.

It was in Kabul that Zainab made a half-hearted attempt to learn the English language. It was not her idea but Ghulam Nabi's. One day it occurred to him that Zainab's life with a husband educated in England could be made more companionable if she knew some English. Like most of the family she stood in awe of Ghulam Nabi, and was of an age when she could hardly have any opinion of her own on the subject. Her acquiescence encouraged Ghulam Nabi. An

Aligarh-educated Indian teacher was employed to coach her. She had attended school for eight years in Dodhi and picked up the rudiments of the language. Her father knew English reasonably well but never thought that Zainab need learn it seriously. A curtain was drawn between the student and the teacher. Two copies of the primer were purchased for each party. Soon Ghulam Nabi found the teacher's pronunciation unsatisfactory; it was too native. Zainab remembered all her life that the three words of which Ghulam Nabi made an issue were "cow", "group" and "tooth", which the teacher pronounced, respectively, as "caoo", "grupp" and "tuth". He was replaced by another with a degree from Lahore, but he was only a shade better. At times Ghulam Nabi, who had learnt his English from British masters in Batala, sat with the teacher and the taught to help, but he was a busy man and the arrangement broke down. Finally an English engineer, who was planning the building of a dam, was called in. English being his native tongue, at least his pronunciation was correct. But Zainab was shy and nervous. Sultan, who sometimes joined her, was too young and carefree to be a source of confidence. But the tuition continued.

When she left Kabul towards the end of 1908 she was literate in English by the United Nations' definition of later times. That is, she could sign her name in English, read and comprehend the headlines of an English newspaper, and speak elementary sentences. Her proficiency was comparable to Waziruddin's in his own time. It was later that she improved her vocabulary, practised to speak in the language, and gained some confidence in whatever she knew. She was never fluent. But the foundation was not too infirm, nor whatever was built upon it. In the 1920s she enlarged her knowledge with the help of Dr. and Mrs. Haig. They were family friends, and my father had arranged Dr. Haig's appointment as a professor at Islamia College, Lahore. They became the closest of friends, and after King Amanullah Haig

was the second male of the human species whom Amman met and talked to without a veil in between.

I remember that two years before her death she used to correct the pronunciation of her grandchildren of four words in particular, "democracy", "photography", "refer" and "prefer" – all mispronounced even today by educated Pakistanis as "damo-crasy", "foto-grafi", "rafer" and "prafar". Borrowing some arrogance from her husband, who was unforgiving in this matter, when she heard Indians mangle the language in their speech, she would say, "He speaks English like native". One day hearing this and noticing the absence of the indefinite article before "native", I said, "Amman, you also speak like a native. Where is the 'a' before native?" Her answer was serenely illogical and gloriously irrelevant, "I am not an Englishwoman. I am a native." This time the "a" was in place. I laughed; she laughed with me. And then to my astonishment, she said, "Who was it who said that when he thought of Rome he was above grammar?" My mouth fell open and I asked, "What is that? Who told you this?" Quite calmly she replied, "Many years ago Dr. Haig quoted somebody to this effect. It just stuck in my mind. I thought it will silence you. It is a clever statement, isn't it? Ask your father who said it." I did, and was told that it was Sigismund, whose exact words were "I am thinking of Rome and therefore above grammar". I came back to Amman and repeated the quotation. I feared that this would embarrass her and was scolding myself in my mind when, with a ravishing smile and a glint in her eyes, she said, "My memory is good, isn't it? As for the language, I am a woman and therefore above grammar." Her sense of humour was irrepressible. We laughed together again, so loudly and hilariously that my father walked over to where we were sitting to inquire what the matter was. When he heard the story, he turned towards me and said, "Your mother has no peer. Make your memory as good as hers, and learn from her the art of repartee." I can

never forget the look on my mother's face. She was as happy as a graduate on his degree day.

She could read the railway timetable, which was useful because she travelled a great deal. She could tell her older grandchildren meanings of difficult words. She could explain with patience the difference between thorough and through. And she could get the right book (be it on art or law or history) from the shelves of my father's library when asked to do so. But she never learned how to write English. My father was content. By the standards and practice of that age what she had was more than enough.

Zainab's struggle with the English language in Kabul gave cause for some hilarity in the home. Nur was the chief character in this amiable horseplay. She wanted Zainab to develop the same relationship with her which she herself had established over the years with Zuhra – more of a sister than a mother-in-law. It took some time but the desired end was achieved. Zainab's living in Kabul with her in-laws for a few years helped in this happy development. She strictly observed the family code of giving Nur the greatest respect, and yet looked upon her as a friend and an older sister, rather than the dreaded mother-in-law. They joked together, gossiped, exchanged opinions about people and events which seemed often to coincide, and understood each other perfectly. Their minds were tuned to the same pole.

Therefore, Nur's light-hearted taunts did not irritate Zainab. When Nur remarked, " Zainab, You are learning English so that when Abdul Aziz comes back you can talk to him in a language which we don't know, and perhaps say bad things about us, even in our presence." And Zainab would reply, "Amman, a man and wife can speak to each other in many languages. English is not necessary for the purpose. But it would certainly please your son that I have picked some English without having gone to London." At another time Nur would say, "Hai! Zainab, when a letter arrives for the Doctor

sahib [Ghulam Nabi], I can't even read the address, and you can read the letter and, however imperfectly, understand the gist of it." And pat would come the reply, "Amman, I think it is a good thing to know another language. Tayaji [Ghulam Nabi] is a very wise person. You shouldn't feel envious. My times are different from yours. When my husband returns and discovers my new acquisition I am sure he will be pleased."

Zainab, along with the rest of the family, also perfected her Persian in Kabul. Everyone had a good grasp of it before coming here but, apart from Ghulam Nabi, none could speak it. The Kabul years were put to good use. The women began to converse with the Afghan servants in Persian. This practice spread over many hours each day swiftly led to proficiency. By the time Zainab left Kabul her spoken Persian was fluent, something my father envied but could not match. She also picked up some Pashto.

Every year on the day following the Ramazan Eid Ulya Hazrat hosted a lunch at the palace for the wives and children of the courtiers. Ghulam Nabi's and Ghulam Muhammad's families were also commanded to be present. When the Eid fell during the winter months when the doctors' families were away in the Punjab, a special lunch was arranged for them later. The Queen insisted that she must see at least once a year the womenfolk of the King's doctors. Apart from the excellent fare served with proverbial Central Asian hospitality and royal generosity, Zuhra, Nur, Wazir, Zainab and Sultan learned the manners, punctilios and etiquette of the court. Later Zainab used to taunt her husband good humouredly that if he had supped with Sayyid Ameer Ali and some prominent British public men every month in London she had lunched with a bevy of royal personages two or three times a year and a future king came to her house to see her every week.

Of course, the luncheons at the palace were formal affairs. The royal ladies were kind to everyone and showed

deference to Zuhra because of her age and status as Ghulam Nabi's mother. But queens are queens, and Zuhra and Nur could not develop the kind of affectionate and intimate rapport with them which they had established so effortlessly with the family of the ruler of Bahawalpur. Yet royal company had its own mystique and glamour and the women of Batala wallowed in its reflected glory.

In late September or early October 1908 Abdul Aziz returned from England, rested for a couple of days in Batala, and then arrived in Kabul to pay his respects to his parents and reclaim his wife. On Ghulam Nabi's orders he stayed there for a month during which he was received in audience by the King twice. Winter had set in and he accompanied the women to Batala, and after some time he and Zainab went to Dodhi to see Ghulam Qadir and Piranditti, and then left for Rangoon in Burma where Abdul Aziz set up his legal practice.

The Kabul establishment was reduced by one person, Zainab; but everyone missed her, most of all Nur who in these three years had come to love her petite daughter-in-law very much. A little later Sultan was married to Muhammad Ali in Baṭala, shrinking Ghulam Nabi's family further, and leaving only Zuhra, Nur and Wazir to live with the doctor. True that all his sons and daughters were away, and he missed them. But his life was busy and he was enjoying it. In fact, all but the last two years of his Kabul life were gratifying and he trod on air. He liked his job, he did what he was asked to do not as a duty which bound him but as a vocation which satisfied him, enjoyed the trust and pleasure of the Amir, lived with his nearest and dearest blood relatives (mother, brother, daughter and sister), and amassed a fortune in money and chattels. One of his sons was now a practising lawyer, the other an undergraduate at Aligarh and a little later at the Government College, Lahore.

Several recordable changes took place in the family in these years. Ghulam Muhammad had had his first daughter,

Firoz, in April 1899, his first son, Hakim Jan, in October 1901, and his second daughter, Khurshid, in August 1904 – all these before he came to Kabul. After that he had another daughter, Mumtaz, in 1909, a son, Ghulam Ahmad Gul, in 1917, and another daughter, Fahmida, in October 1917. In 1905, Zainab's only sister, Kulsum, married Muhammad Hayat, but died a year later. In December 1908, Zainab's eldest brother, Hamid, married Sardar, only to see her die in September 1909. In 1911, Abdul Aziz shifted his practice from Rangoon to Hissar. In 1912, Sharfo died at the house of her younger son, Akbar Husain. In 1914, Ghulam Muhammad's daughter, Firoz, married her cousin Abdul Wahid; in the same year his brother, Ghulam Qadir, retired from Dodhi and settled down in Batala. In January 1916, Abdul Aziz moved once more from Hissar to Montgomery (now Sahiwal). In the May of the same year his brother, Hamid, entered the Punjab Civil Service, and Ghulam Qadir's son, Majid, married his cousin Habib.

The years 1915 and 1916 were traumatic in Ghulam Nabi's life. The only happy note was struck by his younger son's marriage in September 1916. The rest was nothing but unrelieved tragedy.

THE PASSING AWAY OF NUR: 12 JULY 1915

In October 1914 Ghulam Nabi's family came to Batala as usual to spend their winter there. The cold months passed uneventfully, but when in March-April the time came to return to Kabul Nur felt weak and slightly unwell. She asked Zuhra and Wazir to leave but they refused. Gradually Nur's physical infirmity increased, but expert diagnosis could not identify the cause of the trouble. She did not feel really bad and thought that the illness would pass with time. She was only 61 and, though having borne eleven 11 children, still slim and straight and smart. But the

vivacity was gone, though the good spirits remained. She still smiled at everyone and joked with Zuhra and Wazir.

Towards the end of June her condition suddenly worsened. Ghulam Nabi was informed but could not come as the Amir had had a minor stroke and needed the doctor twenty-four hours a day. Ghulam Muhammad offered to take his place but he did not agree. By the time the Amir was slightly better and could do without round the clock ministrations it was too late. Abdul Aziz and Zainab came to Batala from Hissar and Hamid from Lahore. The daughters had arrived earlier.

Nur was in her full senses when she breathed her last on 12 July 1915. She had said a few cheerful words of farewell to her children and Zainab, asking them not to mourn her but pray for her soul. Characteristically, her last words were addressed to Zainab, not to her sons: "Zainab, I know you will miss me. Do so by all means. I shall be watching from up there, and I will be pleased." Having spoken these words she closed her eyes, took a few deep breaths, and slipped away into eternity.

Everyone cried bitterly, but Zainab wept uncontrollably like a small child. Zuhra had lost a daughter, not a daughter-in-law. Zainab's friend had gone. The two sons were deprived of God's greatest gift, a mother. One and all praised her, not because the occasion or the ritual demanded it, but because she deserved it. The servants were prostrate wit grief. Some of the old retainers still remembered the dainty little bride who had arrived in Kahnuwan and, through a chemistry beyond anyone's comprehension, slowly changed the character, temperament and bearings of the rigid and stiff Ghulam Nabi.

Abdul Aziz had lived with her for only twenty years of his life. Abdul Hamid even less. They bemoaned this loss till their own ends. My father used to tell me, again and again, long after Nur had gone, that did he but know that she would leave him so early he would not have gone to

England. He called her Maan, and used to roll the syllable off his tongue with a love that lived with pain.

The death shook Zainab to her innermost core: the maiden who had lived in Dodhi till she was eighteen and hardly known Nur, the bride who had lived with her for a mere one year in Batala and three years in Kabul, but the four years that had brought her the love of a mother, the affection of a sister and the loyalty of a friend. For seven years now she had not lived with her but she felt so vulnerable, so insecure, so unprotected. It was a wonder for Abdul Aziz to suspect that perhaps she loved Nur even more than he did. Probably he was right.

In later years when she talked to me untiringly about Nur, her eyes would brim with tears, her lips would quiver, and she would pronounce her name again and again and again, never making do with the pronoun "she", as if she was repeating a beloved's name on the rosary of love. I was then very young, in my mid-teens, with only a fuzzy and nebulous understanding of what love meant or could mean, but I would throw myself into her arms and, nestled in her lap, the greatest throne a human being can occupy, kiss her tears away and say,

"Don't weep, Amman, don't weep. But tell me more about dadi Nur."

She would smile through her tears, like a moon emerging from behind a cloud, and say,

"But you never saw Nur. I don't know why you listen so eagerly when I talk of Nur."

"No, Amman, don't say that. I have seen dadi Nur."

"When? How?" she would ask, a little puzzled.

"Just now. In your eyes. I always do when you talk about her."

And she would kiss me again and again as if I was her only confidant. Thus mother and son went on talking of a woman who had been in her grave for a quarter of a

century, and who was yet so near to us that she was pulsatingly and vividly alive in our home. "Nur", "Dadi Nur", I would call her name again and again, as if she were a living playmate of mine, not my dead grandmother, whom I had never seen, not even her photograph.

Zuhra's grief was deeper and its pangs sharper. She had known Nur longer than any of the mourners. A full 50 years. It was in 1865 that she had gone to Kaithan on the betrothal of her eldest son Azizuddin to Sharfo. There, amid a crowd of women and girls, a small fair girl of about ten years of age had caught her eye. She is Sharfo's younger sister, somebody told her. On later visits she had seen her grow into a good looking maiden. She chose her for Ghulam Nabi but did not tell anyone, and brought her to Kahnuwan to stay with her for six months to study her closely, and finally persuaded Ghulam Nabi to marry her in 1870. The young bride had fulfilled all her expectations, changed Ghulam Nabi for the better, pleased him and proved a good housewife.

No one in the family, not even Ghulam Nabi, owed so much to Nur as Zuhra. The debt was unforgettable and unrepayable. After Waziruddin's death it was Nur who had, with great psychological insight and genuine affection, saved Zuhra from a mental collapse. By giving her unstinted love to the distraught widow and using ways and means of her own devising this bride of two years, not yet twenty in age, had slowly but irreversibly pulled Zuhra out of her trough of deep depression, brought her back to the living world, and rekindled her interest in ordinary everyday affairs. By sharing her good moments and bad, smiling and laughing with her, visiting and travelling in her company, she had made a new woman of her, and freed her long widowhood from melancholy, hopelessness and despair.

Zuhra had seen how deftly and intelligently Nur ran the household in Batala, Peshawar, Bahawalpur and Kabul. Her

buoyancy of spirits had solved so many problems, her wisdom averted so many crises, her sane advice warded off so many embarrassing situations, her cheerful hospitality attracted and pleased so many visitors and guests, her sprightly self enlivened so many gatherings, her humour laced with gentle mischief cheered the home so often. In Bahawalpur Nur could enter into gentle banter with the royal ladies and win their smiles. Remember her quip about the Nur Mahal. Even in Kabul she could joke with Ulya Hazrat and endear herself to the young princes and princesses. Amanullah, the future king, would call at Ghulam Nabi's house expressly to see and talk to "Amman Nur", and congratulate her on her appointment as the governor of Nuristan (a province of Afghanistan) – his standard joke.

Zuhra's mental eye now saw Nur's whole life as a film which she had been privileged to watch. She had been not only her daughter-in-law, and daughter, and a younger sister and a friend, but something more beyond all these roles. She had been a magician. With her passing away, realized Zuhra, a miracle-worker had gone out of the lives of all who had known her.

Ghulam Nabi, her husband for 45 years, sat in Kabul, stunned and stupefied. His mind, so rational up to this moment, refused to take in the reality of her death. He, who had let an iron discipline take over his life, now cried like a child. Ghulam Muhammad later told the family that for several hours he did not leave his room, and when at last he emerged his eyes were so swollen from crying that he could hardly see. The Amir understood and excused his absence. He did not go to Batala, because he dreaded to be in a house where Nur was no longer present.

Like Zuhra, he too saw a film running in his mind. His stubborn refusal to marry Nur because she was Sharfo's sister, his mother's pleadings, his surrender, his wedding, his discovery that Nur was the woman for whom his

subconscious had been craving for years. Just as Zuhra recalled how Nur had transformed her widowhood, Ghulam Nabi remembered with a stab in his heart how Nur had cast a spell on him and changed his life for all the years to come. How skilfully, imperceptibly, taking her own time, choosing the points of intervention, at times by example and at times by exhortation, now laughingly, now sternly, all the time weaving a web of tenderness around him, she had assaulted his habits of isolation, his reticence, his precocious seriousness, his lack of interest in the pleasures of life, his want of friends, the stiff, unsmiling face he turned towards society, all his self-made ideals and principles which were good for a dervish, not for a man. He had retreated, not into his own self, but into the field of Nur's choosing.

In this field Nur forced him to look into his own mind and decide if the way she was showing him was the right one or not. He did so, then looked into Nur's joyous eyes, and gave his life into the safe and exhilarating keeping of his dear wife. Her triumph was as complete as his transformation. And a new Ghulam Nabi and an enchantress called Nur set out on their lives' journey which was full of joy and grace. The journey was now over. The better partner had gone to meet her Maker. What was left was a wasteland.

Nur was gone, leaving a charming memory, like a bouquet of flowers pressed reverently between the leaves of a favourite book of poems. He remembered her, now a blushingly demure bride. now a housewife of stirring simplicity, now a young woman of impudent freshness, now a beloved of tender and timid intimacies – the foaming, frothing images refused to go away. His life with her had been as intoxicating as a spring morning. She had tried to learn him as one learns passages from the scriptures. She had always been a pageant of delight, looking even more beautiful in her autumnal mellowness – thin and straight as a line in a geometrical construction. The pulse of their contact had been even, slow and rich. She had

walked through his life with the steady, smooth movement of a sailing boat. How miraculous had been their married life: he becoming the pride of her life, she the delight of his existence. Indeed, a bird of her plumage was rare. He thought of her and the procession of images was unending. Shimmers of intangible forms danced before his closed eyes.

He craved for the sound of her voice, but in the darkness of disaster he could hear nothing, see nothing. The strings of memory were being plucked, producing only dirges. Years had bound their souls. Now her song was sung. The lyre lay broken.

One single letter of Ghulam Nabi survived the holocaust of destruction of 1947. It was written from Kabul to my father. In it he made it clear that his sense of loss was so inconsolable that he was contemplating suicide. That sums up the monstrosity of his deprivation. It is also the greatest tribute he could have paid to Nur.

Zuhra and Nur never went back to Kabul, and Ghulam Nabi spent the next 18 months of his job in lonely misery. The only emotional link that kept him there was Ghulam Muhammad's presence.

However stark the tragedies of life, human existence goes on like a running brook. Preparations for the wedding of Ghulam Nabi's younger son, Abdul Hamid, were almost complete. Nur had done much. In May 1916 Hamid entered the Punjab Civil Service, and soon afterwards he was betrothed to Sardar, the daughter of a wealthy family of Wazirabad. The wedding took place in September. Ghulam Nabi was still grief stricken and asked Abdul Aziz, who was now practising in Montgomery, to take a month off his professional commitments and look after all arrangements. With the help of Hamid and two cousins Abdul Aziz and Zainab did what needed to be done.

In spite of the sombre shadow of Nur's death which refused to dissipate, the marriage took place with a show of

great pomp. Once again the clan got together in larger numbers than ever before. The haveli was already full of people when more guests arrived. A few houses had to be borrowed in the neighbourhood. A special railway train was hired to carry the 300-strong wedding party to Lahore and from there to Wazirabad. The Wazirabadis, not to be outdone in hospitality and pageantry, had rented dozens of bungalows for the overnight stay of the party. All went well and the Batala people returned the next day in the same train, bringing with them the most beautiful bride ever to enter our family. Two days later the Wazirabadis arrived for the *walima* and returned the same day. In the following week Hamid and Sardar left for Hoshiarpur where Hamid was posted as additional district magistrate.

The place of posting was a happy coincidence as Mukerian, Kaithan and Dasuha were not far away. Hamid had a large official bungalow and several official and private servants. As long as he stayed there his relatives from these towns were frequent visitors. Sardar felt less lonely and also got to know a lot of her husband's relatives. All his life Hamid loved to have as many people as possible at his table. His hospitality, no doubt inherited from Nur, was a byword in the family.

DEATH OF GHULAM QADIR: OCTOBER 1916

The grand marriage was still green fresh in the minds of everyone when tragedy came visiting again. In October (1916) Ghulam Qadir died. Only two years before he had retired from Dodhi and come to Batala to live in his haveli inside the Thathiari Gate. Having lived all his working life far away from the family he had been almost a stranger to Batala and to many in the family. But there are certain bonds which are too strong to be affected by time and distance. It was once again a sorely testing time for Zuhra,

Ghulam Nabi and Zainab, who were now joined as mourners by Piranditti (the new widow), Azizuddin and Ghulam Muhammad.

Ghulam Qadir was Zuhra's first son to go and the mother's heart shuddered and broke. He was his only son who had spent so little time with her – the childhood years in Kahnuwan when he was exclusively hers, then a few months of living together in Lahore and (in the holidays) Kahnuwan when he was studying along with Ghulam Nabi and Ghulam Muhammad, a few weeks altogether of his leave from Dodhi spent in Batala, and the last one year when Zuhra had returned from Kabul. The total did not amount to more than 7 or 8 years. But what did that matter? He was her son and he was dead. And that did matter. A mother's heart can stand much suffering and bear much torture. But her child's death is an agony whose sharp point is not blunted by the passage of time or any other circumstance. Nur had not been her child, but had become one by the links of love. She had gone away a year ago. Now his son had bid the eternal farewell. And she could do nothing, nothing, nothing. She cried her eyes out, and struck her hands against her forehead, and prayed for inner strength and her own death. The first supplication was denied; the second was granted.

In spite of long separations, Ghulam Nabi had been very close to Ghulam Qadir. He had played with him when he lived in Kahnuwan and later visited the family from Batala in his school-days; he had kept him with himself in Lahore and educated him; and he had taken him to Banda and later got him a job in Dodhi. Since then they had not met much. But he was a brother, his own blood. Already devastated by Nur's death, his heart was bruised again on Ghulam Qadir's demise.

The two women closest to the deceased were his wife and daughter. Piranditti cried as only a widow could and nobody dared share her sorrow in equal measure. Zainab

lost a father who had showered so much love and care on her for 18 years, sent her to a good school, taught her Persian, and more importantly passed on to her his love of poetry. Unknown to himself, he had prepared her well for spending her whole life among people who wrote and sang and read and relished poetry – Ghulam Nabi, Zuhra, Nur and Abdul Aziz. Because she had never gone back to live in Dodhi after her marriage in 1903 she felt her loss the greater. Regrets came rushing in, but they are always too late and add to the torture.

Ghulam Qadir had been a man of individuality all his life. He was born different from his brothers. He was gregarious but at the same time lived in a world of his own, peopled by books and poetry and imagination. Poetry moved him and he had studied it so long and deeply that he was a mine of knowledge always ready to explode. Poetry moved him to the depths of his heart. This love of literature and reading set him apart from his brothers. He loved them no less than they loved him, but he preferred the company of books to that of people. In this respect he was a bit of an introvert. When he talked within his inner circle or his family he decked out the tale in gorgeous drapery, and phrases rolled delightfully from his tongue. He had a remarkable memory for verse and rhyme and commanded a rich store of ghazals and couplets in Urdu and Persian with the recitation of which he regaled his family and friends. He had once tried his hand at composing a few Urdu ghazals, but finding them inferior to the work of the classical poets he had read tore them up. His only hobby was chess, which he played so well that he was frequently invited by some *ta'luqdars* of Oudh to participate in the championships they patronized.

During his last two years spent in Batala he was very happy. Perhaps he now regretted his long exile in Dodhi and his separation from the family, and wanted to make amends

and use the available time in re-establishing old contacts. He visited Azizuddin and Fazl Bibi every day in the morning, and spent all his evenings at the big haveli with his mother and Nur (as long as she lived). These meetings recreated the past and convinced him that he was a member of the family which held him dear. He died a happy man, at peace with the world and his own self. He was buried near Nur in the family graveyard outside the Thathiari Gate, not far from his house.

Of Ghulam Qadir's three sons, all younger than Zainab, the eldest, Hamid, had married a cousin while still a student in 1908. She had died within a year, and he was now a bachelor again. After graduating from Aligarh he was now employed in a government office in Lahore. Majid was 26, had married a cousin four months earlier, and was employed in the Jhang district court. Rashid was 17 or 18, still at school, and unable to look after his mother. Zainab decided to take Piranditti and Rashid with her to Montgomery. Later Rashid went away on his truant travels which lasted over 30 years. Piranditti lived with Zainab and Abdul Aziz till her end in 1923.

DEATH OF ZUHRA: 9 DECEMBER 1916

Zuhra's wish to die, pronounced on Ghulam Qadir's death on 7 October 1916, was fulfilled exactly two months and two days later. She did not fall ill. She died of grief and old age. Her heart, broken beyond repair by Nur's death and dealt another blow by his son's passing away, sank and stopped on 9 December (1916).

I have never been able to understand one thing. Even well-knit families usually don't eat their hearts out at the death of the very old. For no reason at all we think that old age is a prelude to certain death. We expect the end. We take it in our stride. But Zuhra's passing away shook the family as nothing else had done since Waziruddin's death in 1872.

When Waziruddin pulled the family out of the old rut into the new age Zuhra worked in tandem with her. She could

have hindered him, criticized his views, proved a stubborn opponent. She did not. She could have insisted that her first-born would not accept the job of a *patwari*. She did not. She could have stood in the way of sending Ghulam Nabi to Batala for his education; no mother can easily bear separation from her children. She did not. Again she could have tried to impede Ghulam Nabi's and other sons' departure for Lahore. She did not. These were the negative virtues of acquiescence, deference, compliance and tractability, certainly not of submissiveness, obsequiousness, docility or servility. She was a woman with a mind of her own.

When positive action was demanded she showed her true mettle. Few women in that age and for many years after could have stood up to a masterful husband on the point of shopping in Anarkali in 1868. She alone could have persuaded the recalcitrant and scared Ghulam Nabi with logic and love to marry Sharfo's sister. Her greatest test of will and determination came after her widowhood. It was she who ran the Kahnuwan estate single-handedly with skill and wisdom of an experienced zamindar. She did not run away from the aching cares of responsibility. The fire and faith within her won the day. It was her decision to move to Batala and not to Amritsar or Lahore. She chose her daughters-in-law and, except for Sharfo, made them her dear friends. She shared the torture suffered by Ghulam Nabi at Sharfo's hands, and a few years later provided shelter and sustenance to the same Sharfo, made her sons her own son's (Ghulam Nabi's) sons-in-law, and looked after the family for long years. She had the heart of a lioness.

She proved an excellent mother to her sons, and did not let them feel the absence of their father. She had the talent of putting the lowest at their ease, a gift for making friends, and a genius for building bridges. She knew how to command loyalty. Her servants and tenants in Kahnuwan would have laid down their lives for her if called upon. She

kept her old contacts in good repair while establishing new links. More than Ghulam Nabi it was she who extended her hand of friendship to Fazl Bibi and brought Azizuddin back into the family fold and the circle of brothers. Even if she had to rebuke someone the warmth of her heart took away all the chill from her reprimand. She was always composed and cool in the most agitating circumstances.

Nor did her sang-froid desert her in her dealings with people outside the family. In Bahawalpur she had met the ladies of the Nawab as equal to equal, without any inferiority complex, and commanded the respect of the royal harem. In Kabul she bowed before Ulya Hazrat as the protocol demanded, but once the ceremony was over behaved with dignity and self-confidence and conversed with her informally as if to the manner born.

There was one difference between Zuhra and Ghulam Nabi. Without meaning to, the son created a sense of awe in the people around him, though everyone knew that a lot of affection and fellow feeling lay behind the starched and steely mask. Zuhra combined a regal presence with a natural *bonhomie*. Retaining her dignity, she would show respect to her elders, affectionate intimacy to her equals, maternal concern to the younger generation, and loving playfulness to the children. She made a place for herself in every kind of society and gathering. This endeared her to all.

She exuded authority with such vitality and profusion that to differ from her seemed to be denying the existence of God. Sane and balanced in her judgements, her temper was as steady as time. The worst crime in her calendar was hypocrisy, the homage paid by vice to virtue. Time made good use of her, and she of life's opportunities. In short, she led a life which was as harmless as it was wholesome. In her old age, with its mellowness of tints, she was a benison incarnate.

The aged mourners from Kahnuwan said that the mutation by death which had begun with Waziruddin's

death in 1872 had come its full circle now in 1916 with Zuhra's passing away.

Zuhra was born in about 1830 when the Sikhs ruled the Punjab and the coming of the British was below the horizon. When she died 86 years later the British were firmly in the saddle and the land had changed beyond recognition. Her own family had marched with the times with the efforts and blessings of her husband and her own. What a distance it had covered and how many milestones left behind: from a squiredom in an obscure corner of the province to the status of a courtier in Bahawalpur and then the membership of the royal court of Afghanistan, from the company of cultivators and petty landholders to the affiliation with the inner circles of royalty. Not a bad record by any standard. And though the initiative had come from Waziruddin, and Ghulam Nabi had been the real achiever, it was Zuhra who had sacrificed, struggled, endeavoured, endured and striven. Without her iron determination and diplomatic finesse the triumph would not have become a miracle.

With the death of this grande dame we severed our last links with the feudal order, with Kahnuwan, with the old epoch. With her passing away a stirring and momentous era ceased.

Exactly a month and a day later Ghulam Nabi lost his second daughter Umrao, wife of Akbar Husain.

RESIGNATION FROM AFGHAN SERVICE

When Nur had died Ghulam Nabi had thought of resigning from Amir Habibullah's service and retiring to Batala. He was still mulling over it when Zuhra died. That decided the matter for him. He had lost his wife, one brother and his mother. Even his daughters had begun to leave him one by one. Who knew when his own time would come? Was this exile, however magnificent, worth the pain

of living away from home and the remaining dear ones? Kabul was a far away place. His sons and daughters could not visit him as often as they and he wished. He made up his mind. In the spring of 1917 he left Kabul, Ghulam Muhammad, and the Amir's service and returned to Batala.

Habibullah wanted to retain him but, seeing the doctor's firmness of purpose, gave way. Ghulam Nabi had served him well in spite of his own deprivations and emotional sufferings. It would be unfair to stop him. Let him go. But let his departure be marked by all the dignity and full honours. The King hosted a banquet in Ghulam Nabi's honour which every courtier, sardar and noble was commanded to attend. At the end of the ceremony the King bestowed a robe of honour on the doctor, presented him with two richly and beautifully worked Iranian carpets, one in blue and one in red, and announced that the government had sanctioned for Ghulam Nabi a pension equal to his current salary. The 1897 honours of Bahawalpur were repeated in greater glory.

The spring had fully set in the Afghan capital, fresh flowers ornamented the countryside, there was still a nip of cold in the air but the son shone bright and the sky was blue, when Ghulam Nabi was seen off by his brother and colleagues. He cried, not so much because he was parting from a benevolent king or leaving a city which had been his home for 12 years, but in memory of the deliriously happy days which he had spent here with Zuhra and Nur and which were now but a searing memory. These days would never return. Those women would never come back. The glint and thrill of happiness had gone out of life. In their place there was now a leaden heaviness in the heart.

Ghulam Nabi was 67 when he returned to Batala in the spring of 1917. When he looked back on his life he saw much that was pleasant and good. He had done what he had wanted to do: relieving the pain of the high and the low,

sharing the suffering of humankind, fighting disease and ill health and distress, sometimes snatching the very ill and hopeless from the jaws of death. He was pleased that he had lived a useful life.

Often useful and happy lives do not bring adequate rewards. But Ghulam Nabi made a fortune from his work and service and made the family rich. Much had come to the haveli from Bahawalpur, but a great deal of it had been spent on the weddings of the seven daughters and two sons and on looking after several family members who were not so well blessed in worldly goods.

Much more had come from Afghanistan at a time when most of the calls upon his pocket had already been met. In terms of money he had saved enough to buy ten squares of fertile agricultural land in district Lyallpur (now Faisalabad), two 10-kanal bungalows in Lahore, and a 20-kanal plot on Multan Road, Lahore, and invested several thousand rupees in a British oil firm in Calcutta. His inherited property was still intact: the big haveli, two small havelis, ten shops in the bazaar, and two squares of agricultural land just outside the town.

He was still left with two lifelong pensions from Bahawalpur and Afghanistan. In Bahawalpur he had started at Rs. 250 a month; after a year he had made a big jump to Rs. 400. The annual increment was Rs. 50. When he left his salary was Rs. 800 a month; and that became his pension on retirement. In Afghanistan he started at Rs. 800 a month. The Amir who was very pleased with him fixed his annual increment at Rs. 100. At retirement he was drawing Rs. 1700 a month, which then became his pension. Thus his two pensions now brought him Rs. 2500 a month. Comparing the purchasing power of the rupee of today with that of 1917, this income was approximately equal to Rs. two lakhs a month. With an income of this order he lived in great luxury, with no less than 12 servants to attend to the needs of just two persons, he and his daughter Wazir.

As for the movable possessions the haveli was replete with all kinds of them. The perks and gifts of Bahawalpur had been generous. To that was now added the bounties of Afghanistan. When I went to live in Batala 20 years later I saw room after room full of expensive articles and goods.

The most costly were the carpets. After covering the floor of every room of the house and sending six carpets each to Abdul Aziz and Abdul Hamid, there were still about 20 left which were rolled and stacked in a back room. A few were of great value, like the four red Bokharas spread in our ground floor drawing room-cum-library, a blue and gold Isfahan in my parents' bedroom, another of the same provenance in my bedroom which I shared with my sister Kishwar, and 4 Central Asian rugs in the guest rooms. Besides, there were a score or more of prayer rugs of varied origins and sizes, including one so large that 4 adults could say their prayers on it.

Then there was a large collection of wick lamps, both from Bahawalpur and Kabul. The latter were imported from Russia and France and were of exquisite workmanship. Their size and height and shape varied. The six largest were 4-wick lamps with an extra large pedestal to hold a big can of oil. Some lamps had wrought iron bases, others of glass or silver or crystal.

There were also many candlestick-holders of all types and shapes. The one I remember as a curiosity was a very long-handed black iron contraption with a wooden handgrip which held, at the other end, four candles of a large size firmly embedded in deep cavities with a thin glass cover over the candles. I discovered that it was meant to serve as a movable lamp. One carried it in one hand into a dark room to find one's way or look for any article. Very useful and brighter than a battery, it could be placed on the floor or on the top of a box while one looked around and shifted or moved things.

Other articles included finely lacquered tables and desks, revolving deep wooden bookshelves to house large works of reference, tooled leather spectacle cases and document bags, very large wooden boxes lined on the inside with fine thin leather and covered on the outside with thick heavy leather. They were called *yakhdans*.

A small room was full of red and white flowered Russian crockery of extra thin china. It was the famous Gerdner, well known in European capitals, and imported by the Amir of Afghanistan for use in the palace. Its peculiar feature was that when struck it produced a tinny sound as if there was a thin sheet of metal imbedded in the china. The china was fine and smooth and good to look at, but not as elegant or beautiful as the later English high quality china produced by Wedgwood, Minton, Aynsley or Royal Doulton. The Gerdner used in the palace bore the royal coat of arms. Some nobles ordered their own sets with their monograms etched into the china. So did Ghulam Nabi. The four sets I saw in Batala were all monogrammed with the letters GN in gold.

There was a variety of caps, gloves, *postins* and overcoats to keep the Afghan cold at bay. The most interesting was the collection of coats ranging from reefing-jackets, light coats, half coats to raglans and full military overcoats. There were two which I liked the best. These were light grey in colour, made of an unusual fabric which was extraordinarily stiff in texture and very heavy in weight. One needed a pair of sturdy shoulders to wear them. But they were very effective and kept out the most piercing cold wind like a wall of steel. They were made in Russia.

There was a lot else. Cooking utensils, pots and pans, hot-water metal dinner plates, drinking glasses, goblets and tumblers of all sizes and shapes, jugs, curtains, fur slippers, *choghas*, *qabas*, Balaclava helmets, long boots, walking sticks with ivory handles moulded in different shapes, boxes of wood, escritoires, inkstands, tall and thick candles,

gilt frames for photographs and paintings, quilt covers, pillowslips, long and oval mirrors, lengths of silk, karakuli caps and waistcoats, shawls, two cameras presented by the Amir, binoculars, four double-barrelled guns and finely-made cartridge belts, cushions, etc.

It seemed to me as if everything in the house had come from Kabul. My mother told me that Zuhra and Nur, and later she herself, had given away many things to relatives and friends.

I have indicated the nature and size of the contents of the haveli in some detail nor to impress the reader with the wealth of the family but to remind him of the extent of our loss, material and sentimental, when all this and much else was lost in 1947.

THE SORROWFUL YEARS: 1917-1926

Ghulam Nabi's last years in Batala were of rest and retirement. His health was good, though he felt tired, not so much in the body as in mind. The spirits of Zuhra and Nur hovered over every part of the house. He tried desperately to shut his mind to them. He failed. Perhaps, as he told Zainab (who alone had known and loved the dead women as much as he had), he did not really want the unseen presence to go away. He welcomed their influence in the haveli. They were not there in flesh and blood, but their souls were. He could not see them (what was there in the world that he would not give to be able to do that!) but he could feel their spell. He did not want to lose this feeling. It was his last anchor, his only source of happiness, his only consolation.

For hours he would sit and muse and imagine the past: mother and wife walking, cooking, talking, laughing, receiving visitors, climbing up the stairs to the roof, coming down, now in this dress, now in that, now the head covered, now the *dupatta* resting on the shoulders, bright eyes,

smiling lips, moving feet. How every movement was drawn clearly on his mind! How real they still were to him! Love never dies. The loved ones never die as long as they are remembered. He remembered them with an intensity which sometimes seemed to break his heart into two.

Yet he liked to lounge in his easy chair, his eyes flitting from this room to that, from one pillar to another, from the veranda to the courtyard, seeking, looking, craving for the sight of those bodies, not finding them there, and then the eye of the yearning imagination opened and he saw all that he had seen once and could see no more. Two women alive. Mother and wife, wife and mother. Wise, vivacious, loving. He would break down and cry. And Wazir would ask,

"What? The dreams again?"

"Yes, the dreams again. I cannot live without them, and I cannot live with them. That is my agony. That is my fate."

Wazir would understand and start talking about Zuhra and Nur. Father and daughter, both heartbroken in their own separate ways, would bring the past back to life, and with it those who peopled it.

Ghulam Nabi was torn apart by another strange feeling. He did not, could not, decide if he loved and missed Zuhra more than Nur or Nur more than Zuhra. The two women had ruled his life. Sometimes he gave primacy to one, sometimes to the other. Listening to his long talks about the two women, Zainab, when she was in Batala and that was often, suspected that he missed Nur even more than his mother. That did not really surprise her. Zainab herself found Nur unforgettable. Why shouldn't Nur's husband do the same? Ghulam Nabi thought of Nur, dreamed of her, talked to her in his sleep. Each passing day swelled his sense of loss. He was conscious of a void, an emptiness like a vast desert, not only in his life but in his heart.

Time may be happy or unhappy but it passes. So Ghulam Nabi's days went by, night after night, week after week, month after month. There were intervals of relative

calm and some cheer when his sons and daughters came to stay. He played with their children, distributed sweets and money among them, asked questions about their schooling, and answered their queries about a hundred things. His own reading was now limited but when his sons came the old spark was rekindled and he plied them – one a lawyer, the other an administrator – with inquiries about the civil service, rural development, law and justice, quality of lawyers, working of the courts, the way of life in Lahore, and finally he asked if the British civil official was still as rigid and just as in his days. Later, when Abdul Aziz was teaching at the Islamia College, Lahore, he asked him about the institution. He himself had visited it in 1907 with Amir Habibullah. In 1907! How life had changed in these few years! Sometimes his fevered memory returned and he talked with them about Zuhra and Nur. As long as he was fit, it was his daily routine to visit the family graveyard after the early morning prayers and spend an hour or two praying or reciting the Quran at the graves of Zuhra and Nur, or just staring at them. Often he came alone, to be with the dead without any distraction. Sometimes Wazir came with him, and the children when they were visiting.

Ghulam Nabi had resumed writing poetry in Kabul. A couple of years before his resignation he had ordered two hundred sheets of the finest smooth but thick paper from England, asked the court calligrapher who had won plaudits for the quality of his penmanship to inscribe his Persian ghazals, one to a page, in large lettering so that he could read them in his old age. Then he had got the sheets bound in marbled leather. This was his most favoured secular reading in Batala. It made him happy. But when he reached a ghazal that Zuhra and Nur had once upon a time recited with cadence on his request he was lost in thoughts which were at the same time an ecstasy and an agony. There was no escape from the past. The ghosts were always present.

He kept in touch with the family by post or occasional meetings, the latter growing less frequent with time. He travelled only when it could not be avoided: attending weddings of the very nearest relatives or their funerals.

DEATH OF AZIZUDDIN: 1924

The year 1924 was dreadful for Ghulam Nabi. The year was still young when Azizuddin died. Ghulam Qadir had died some years ago. Ghulam Muhammad was first in Kabul and was now in Peshawar. Azizuddin had been his only closest relative available in Batala. And he had made full use of this opportunity and met him every day. Azizuddin's advanced years made it difficult for him to descend the awkward and high stairs of his Khanda Khola house, walk a few hundred yards to the big haveli, and then climb up a lot of steps. Therefore Ghulam Nabi had made it a point to visit his brother every day since his return from Kabul. It broke his tedium of loneliness. It brought the two brothers even closer. It was over 60 years ago that they had been together in Batala when Ghulam Nabi was at school and living with Azizuddin. A long time ago! An age ago!

It pleased Azizuddin and Fazl Bibi to have him with them every day. Their talks ranged over many topics, just brushing the skirts of some, concentrating on others. As it always happens when old men meet, the main subject was the past. There was hardly anything else to talk about. Ghulam Nabi had a lot to say about the ten years he had lived with Azizuddin, and the affection he had received from him and the much-needed protection against Sharfo's hurtful and insulting remarks. In return, Azizuddin, for the first time, would give details of Sharfo's misdemeanours and the torture he had suffered as long as they had lived as man and wife. He said much that Ghulam Nabi had not known about the ways of Sharfo and the breaking point which wrecked the marriage. Maybe he was justifying, to

himself and to Ghulam Nabi, his consequent step to marry Fazl Bibi. Ghulam Nabi understood all and assured his brother that no blame attached to him; in fact, he emphasized, the family owed him an apology for having maligned or at the least cut him off for a few years. He explained that his decision to provide a haven to Sharfo and her boys was not meant as a reproach to him (Azizuddin) but simply a matter of family and humanitarian feeling that she should have a home. He also said that Zuhra had felt very sorry for him and blamed herself for having chosen Sharfo as his bride.

These conversations naturally led to how much both of them missed Zuhra. Azizuddin was all praise for her wisdom. Whatever the ups and downs, he knew she had never stopped loving him. Inevitably Nur was mentioned as a foil to Sharfo and as the great favourite of Zuhra. Azizuddin remarked how lucky Ghulam Nabi had been in his wife, and then, pointing to Fazl Bibi who was sitting by their side, he said with a smile,

"I loved and then married. You married and then loved. How strange! The result was the same: undreamt of happiness. Both of us are very lucky, Ghulam Nabi. Never forget that, and never stop thanking God for it."

"But, *Bhai sahib*, Nur has left me. My happiness is over. My life is now an empty space."

"But remember how much joy she brought into your life and in Ammanji's. Yes, she is dead. But we are all dying with every minute that passes. We are old men, Ghulam Nabi. Think of Nur as a gift of God which illuminated your life. She truly lived up to her name and spread so much light in the family. She was the *nur* of our clan. He who gives the gift has the right to take it away. But it will be yours in eternity. The gift that I received is still here, but I am on my way out."

He stared at Fazl Bibi for a minute, and then continued,

"Do me a favour Ghulam Nabi. Look after her when I am gone. She will have no one in the world. Don't forsake her."

"Don't worry for a moment on that account. She is my sister-in-law. She will live with honour. There will be people to love and serve her. I give you my word."

"And after you? You are not a young man."

"Abdul Aziz and Zainab will look after her. They dare not disregard my wishes."

"I am satisfied. Abdul Aziz is a good boy."

"I like Zainab very much", interposed Fazl Bibi whose future was being decided, "Whatever I have seen of her endears her to me. She is like Nur. Has a heart of gold. Loyal to the family. I will be safe in her care."

Azizuddin brought up this matter again and again in their talk. There was no doubt that he was scared of what would happen to Fazl Bibi after his death, and it was giving him sleepless nights. Ghulam Nabi himself was an old man and waiting for the end. To assure himself and put Azizuddin's mind at rest he wrote a long letter to Abdul Aziz at Lahore, laying upon him the filial duty of taking full charge of Fazl Bibi after Azizuddin's demise and providing her full care and support as long as she lived. Abdul Aziz wrote back, promising to do what his father desired. In their next meeting Ghulam Nabi gave to Azizuddin a copy of his letter to his son and the son's reply. Azizuddin smiled and was satisfied. Abdul Aziz kept his word and, after Ghulam Nabi's death in 1926, he and Zainab looked after the aged Fazl Bibi till her death in 1939.

As fate would have it, the arrangement was made in good time. A few months later Azizuddin died peacefully in his sleep and was buried the same evening. Ghulam Muhammad had come from Peshawar a week earlier, and the three brothers were together when the eldest said the final goodbye.

Ghulam Nabi was the chief mourner as he had been the closest to the deceased all his life. At times he marvelled at his own fortitude. In the space of nine years he had lost his wife, one brother, mother, three daughters and now another

brother. His generation was fast coming to its end. When would his own turn come? Almost everyone he had loved had crossed the bar. There were so many dear faces on the other side, waiting for his arrival. Would it not be a release and a relief to go, and meet them, and live with them for ever? There was virtually nothing to live for on this earth. There was much to die for in the hereafter. He was not a cynic. He was just unafraid of death.

And the desired end was creeping nearer. Two months after Azizuddin's death Ghulam Nabi was struck by paralysis. A man who had lived such an active and brisk life now lay helpless in his bed, just able to move his arms and legs within the tether of two inches and powerless to get up and move around. His speech was only slightly affected, so he could give orders and clearly enunciate his wishes. As he could not say his prayers he had a team of reciters who chanted the Quran for several hours each day for his benefit and satisfaction.

A large number of people came to see him, most of them staying in the haveli for a few days. Many came again and again. His daughters and Zainab took turns to spend a few weeks with him. He spoke a little when he had to. The reveries came back and he lived with them. Zuhra and Nur returned to his mind with redoubled strength and unbearable clarity. Memories came and went, of men and women, and events and incidents, and crises and celebrations, triumphs and disappointments. He relived his life again and again. He was sure that he would not recover. He did not want to. Zuhra and Nur were beckoning him. He had never disregarded their wishes as long as he had fully lived. Why should he do so now that life was trickling out of him drop by drop?

The end came in February 1926, after 18 months of lying on his back. He breathed his last among all his surviving children and his brother and a score of other near relatives. The funeral prayers were attended by almost every adult

Muslim in the town. And then the inevitable. The man who had tamed life to his purpose and had become the maker of the family, the man who had clashed with the mighty imperial British bureaucracy and won, the man who had learnt his manners at royal courts – was now but a mound of earth. One remains, the many change and pass.

THE MAKER OF THE FAMILY

It is not difficult to enumerate Ghulam Nabi's achievements as a human being and as the founder of the modern family. He was a demon for work at the age of 10 when boys play truant at school. He developed a deep sense of responsibility and began to supervise and educate his brothers at the age of 18 when young men look around for fun and games. He assisted his mother in running a large agricultural estate at the age of 20 when his age group seek worldly pleasures. He was a polished courtier of the Nawab of Bahawalpur at the age of 35 when his contemporaries were learning professional skills and hoping for promotion. In Bahawalpur, still in his thirties, he ran a department, kept an exacting Nawab happy, and exercised in practice the authority of a minister. For 12 years he waited on the King of Afghanistan with tact and aplomb in an atmosphere of tribal feuds and courtly intrigues.

He allowed his wife to change his deep-rooted instincts and habits which seemed to be carved in granite before she came, because he loved her and because he acknowledged the wisdom of her ways. He had the intelligence to recognize in his mother a sapient head of the family, and till her death he respected her as if she was a queen and sought her blessings as if she was a saint. He knew that all his training and innate sensibilities needed the guidance of an unerring leader which was his mother. No son loved her mother more and obeyed her so readily and willingly.

To Nur he gave the total love and devotion of a husband, the trust and loyalty of a friend, and the innocent fondness of a playmate. Nothing pleased him more than Nur's approval; nothing hurt him more than her disapprobation. It was a marriage made in heaven, and for the couple transformed this earth into a heaven. Few men have lived so happily with their wives; few men have felt so wretched as widowers.

To Ghulam Muhammad he gave the affection of a father, the love of a brother, the wisdom of a teacher, and the devotion of a friend. He made sacrifices for him such as even few fathers make for their children. When Ghulam Muhammad was in his fifties in Kabul he looked after him so tenderly as if he was still a little boy from Kahnuwan in his charge. He gave him money without stint, found jobs for him, suffered when he was in difficulties, and gloated over his good fortune.

His self-abnegation was heroic. He was lashed by Sharfo's whip of scorn at an age when hurts are never cured and even scars leave the pain of wounds. When life was unkind to her he gave her the run of his house, allotted her a generous allowance, financed her sons' education, found jobs for them, gave them his daughters in marriage and supported them as long as he lived. How many of us can do that? He brought his elder brother and this Sharfo's husband back into the family fold, held him in high respect, made peace with his second wife, and when she became a widow bought her a house, left no desire of hers unfulfilled at his own expense, and on his death passed on this responsibility to his elder son.

He was free with his money, not only inside the family where all his married daughters received an allowance because their husbands had only modest resources, but also at large where all the old retainers of Kahnuwan and many others of Batala received pensions and had the expenses of

their daughters' weddings defrayed, and mosques and hospitals in Batala received regular financial support.

It was Waziruddin who pulled the family out of the old Sikh regime into the modern British age and had the prescience to decide that the future of his sons lay not in continuing the inherited feudal tradition but in the new education and the professions. He sowed the seeds of a revolution. He foresaw, conceived and planned for a new prospect. He gave the clarion call. But it was Ghulam Nabi who gave a practical shape to the ideas, ideals and visions of his father. He was not only the family's first modern educated man but an English-trained physician of distinction. With hard work and a sense of purpose he reached the summit of his profession, in the process making a fortune for the family. By arranging for Ghulam Muhammad's appointment at Kabul he made two branches rich in their own right. He educated both his sons to the highest level, thus ensuring that the light of learning would continue to brighten the coming generations. If some of those who came later fell by the wayside and failed to keep the promise it was because of their own drawbacks and faults and the inscrutable working of Providence.

Ghulam Nabi was able to achieve all this because he was a man cast in the classical mould. He was strong in his virtues and immovable in his certainties. Ordered by his conscience and driven by his own convictions he marched on without a change of trajectory. His resolve was as firm as a mountain chain, and the hue and impulse of his thinking was intense and vibrant. In our family all things by him were measured; he, by none.

He kept his passion for life under rigorous control. The gold and crimson of his official days did not go to his head. He had a god-like self-confidence, and an endurance to match it. In Batala when he began to learn English, in the late evenings and nights in Azizuddin's house he would read

on and on until words danced before his eyes like blown leaves. But instead of giving up and going to bed he would go and wash his face and come back to continue with his labour. And this when he was hardly ten, and there was no father standing behind him and forcing him to work.

When he went to Kabul and success came and took her abode with him no glittering wheels of official favour accelerated his journey to high places. Instead of getting intoxicated with his good fortune, he trained himself in the careful ordering of position and preferment and the niceties of preoccupation with precedence and power. By the time he left Kabul time had stolen many years on its wings but his integrity stood unscathed. The aura of authority around him did not diminish. He still had in his eyebrows an auxiliary pair of hands which could point this way and that indicative of his command. His patrician pride did not abate.

And yet with all the steel in his mind and the command and prerogative on his brow, in the affairs of the heart he was as soft and sensitive as a child, as yielding and tender as down. His love for Nur brought forth the real man ensconced within his intent and forceful exterior. Soon after his marriage he saw, or more truly Nur made him see, a new casement opening on the foam of life. He went through all the emotions which lead to, or rather are a part of, love: sensitiveness, susceptibility, compassion, excitement, delight, desire. The months following their marriage were like opening blossoms. And the two loved and prospered under God's good Providence.

And when Nur died the crust broke and all the softness of the inner man was exposed. Now his only hope was not to despair – a vain hope. Time passed so slowly that he could almost hear the beat of its wings. Memories came as soft as footfalls of the breeze. Every today was nothing but the uneventful tomorrow of yesterday. To his distress he felt the presence of past remembrances with dismaying

clarity. His thoughts of her recoiled upon themselves like waves of the sea. Stabs of memory were his constant companions. Nur was physically dead, but for him she was alive in every other sense. He still lived with her. No man could do more; no lover dared less.

THE FAMILY'S ROLE IN THE HISTORY OF AFGHANISTAN

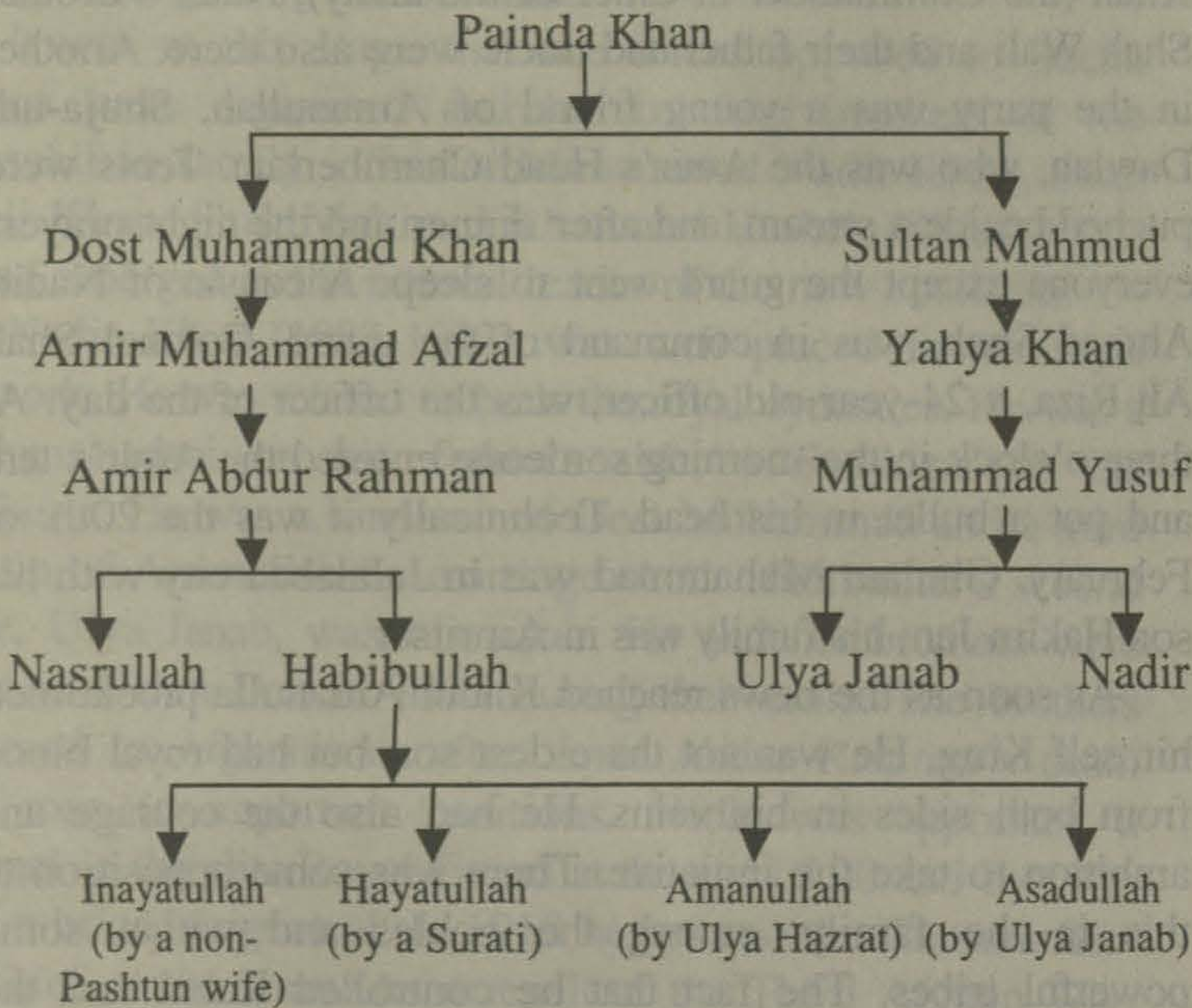
With Ghulam Nabi's death his own and his sons' connection with Afghanistan ended, but not our family's. In fact, later developments brought the family and the country even closer by an outside force, the play of history.

After 1917 Ghulam Muhammad continued to serve Amir Habibullah's harem and for some time the Amir himself. He resigned in 1919 when Amanullah became the King of the country on the ground that he could not serve a man who had been his pupil and before that like his child and a playmate of his eldest son, Hakim Jan. Amanullah understood and let him go with full honours and a generous pension. Hakim Jan had set up a business corporation in Kabul with another office in Peshawar which exported Afghan goods to India and imported Indian goods into Afghanistan. He was doing pretty well, as he had also a big contract for supplying the Afghan army with uniforms and medical supplies. He spent 6 months in Kabul and 6 in Peshawar, and had developed very intimate relations with the King and was also close to his kinsman, Nadir Khan, the future king of the country.

After retirement Ghulam Muhammad settled down in Peshawar, rented a big haveli inside Kohati Gate, and established a large medical store in Qissakhwani Bazaar under the name of M.A.Hakim & Co. Within a few years the shop expanded into the largest medical suppliers in the province and one of the largest in north India. It was

managed by Ghulam Muhammad's son-in-law Abdul Wahid who was also his wife's nephew.

Before proceeding further it is necessary to spell out the family network of Amir Habibullah's elders, contemporaries and successors, so that the reader can better follow the story to be unfolded in the following pages.



When Ghulam Muhammad came to Kabul Amanullah was a lad of 14 and Hakim Jan a child of 6. A close friendship took root between the two boys, bridging their age difference. Ghulam Muhammad was asked by Ulya Hazrat to coach Amanullah in English, history and geography. For five years the young prince received this tuition, and often Hakim Jan sat nearby, listening to what was being said, absorbing some of it, and waiting for the end of the session so that he could play with Amanullah. This friendship was one day to affect the future of the Afghan throne.

Let me go back to Amir Habibullah. He was in Jalalabad in his winter palace in February 1919. Amanullah was in Kabul where he was the provincial governor; his mother, Ulya Hazrat, was in Jalalabad with the Amir. On the 19th. Habibullah rode to a pass in Laghman for an overnight outing. He was accompanied by Nasrullah and Inayatullah; Nadir Khan (the Commander-in-Chief of the army), Nadir's brother Shah Wali and their father and uncle were also there. Another in the party was a young friend of Amanullah, Shuja-ud-Dawlah, who was the Amir's Head Chamberlain. Tents were pitched beside a stream, and after dinner and the night prayers everyone except the guard went to sleep. A cousin of Nadir, Ahmad Shah, was in command of the guard. Colonel Shah Ali Riza, a 24-year old officer, was the officer of the day. At three o'clock in the morning someone entered the Amir's tent and put a bullet in his head. Technically it was the 20th. of February. Ghulam Muhammad was in Jalalabad city with his son Hakim Jan; his family was in Amritsar.

As soon as the news reached Kabul Amanulla proclaimed himself King. He was not the eldest son but had royal blood from both sides in his veins. He had also the courage and ambition to take the initiative. There was some opposition to this in the family, among the nobles and within some powerful tribes. The fact that he controlled Kabul and the national administrative machinery was a great advantage which tilted the balance of power in his favour, for a time.

After a while there was mounting trouble in the countryside. Its tempo increased as time passed and as Amanullah's determination to bring about radical reforms was known to the people. A petty tribal brigand, Amanullah by name, but better known to history as Bacha Saqqa as he was the son of a water carrier, made his writ run in parts of the country and posed a serious challenge to the King. But his authority had shallow roots and his support shifted and veered as the various tribal leaders

could not decide which centre of power to support. The major Afghan tribes became virtually independent. The urban population was ravaged. The army was disorganized. The treasury was depleted. Finally the bandit Amir resorted to extortion. Houses were pillaged. Women were ravished. A reign of terror was ushered in. For King Amanullah things were getting out of hand.

It was at this stage that the forces opposed to Bacha Saqqa were organized and led by four brothers of the Musahiban family – Sardar Muhammad Nadir Khan, Shah Wali Khan, Shah Mahmud Khan and Hashim Khan. Nadir Khan emerged as the natural leader of the new coalition.

Nadir Khan (1883-1933) was well placed in the royal network. He was related to both the royal dynasties. He was a Muhammadzai on his father's side, a Saddozai on his mother's. He was a kinsman of Dost Muhammad and a third cousin of Amanullah by marriage. Amir Habibullah's second wife, Ulya Janab, was his sister. He and his brothers were born in Dehra Dun in India during their exile. The brothers returned to Afghanistan after Amir Abdur Rahman's death and rose to important positions. Nadir was appointed a colonel in the elite Royal Guard at the age of 20 and by 1906 was a brigadier general. In 1913 he became the Commander-in-Chief of the army. As a result of the Third Afghan War, after 1921, he carried a good name and enjoyed considerable trust of the tribes inhabiting the frontier with India. Shah Wali was then the Minister for War. But Nadir had differences with Amanullah on the thrust and tempo of modernization, and in 1924 he was sent out as ambassador to France. Shah Mahmud was made head of the military school in Kabul, and Hashim was appointed Minister in Russia. Two years later Nadir resigned on grounds of ill health and retired to Nice, where he was joined by his two brothers Hashim and Shah Wali.

When Bacha Saqqa rose in revolt and appeared to be gaining some ground the three brothers returned to India. They

disembarked at Bombay from *Kaiser-i-Hind* on 23 February 1929. They were officially greeted by the functionaries of the Government of India but provided no facilities. Nadir was requested to refrain from any sort of political activity in India and to proceed to Afghanistan as expeditiously as possible. During the brothers' stay in Bombay they were kept under careful but unobtrusive surveillance.

Nadir, with Shah Wali and Hashim, left for Peshawar by way of Delhi and reached there on 27 February. Hakim Jan had been called away to Afghanistan by Shah Mahmud a week before, but he returned to Peshawar on 16 February. Ghulam Muhammad had been informed in advance by a courier of Nadir Khan's impending visit to the city. He immediately rented a bungalow in the cantonment area and sent a few of his servants to clean it properly, furnish it and attend upon the guests.

When the three brothers arrived they went into a huddle with Ghulam Muhammad and Hakim Jan. The latter brought them up to date on the state of affairs in Afghanistan and on the Indo-Afghan border, and delivered some messages from Shah Mahmud. Nadir said that the British Indian government had promised immediate help in the shape of some arms and ammunition and Russian aid was expected soon. But his most immediate need was for money to buy the loyalty of certain tribes near the Indian frontier and as many medical supplies as could be arranged. Turning to Ghulam Muhammad he appealed to him in these words:

"Doctor sahib, you and your brother have served Afghanistan for several years with distinction. I think the country has been good to you. Now the country is in dire danger of disintegration and anarchy. Amanullah is powerless. I must try to enter Afghanistan, rally some of the tribes, win the confidence of the army or at least of a good part of it, and reconquer the territory lost to Bacha Saqqa. I can arrange the arms and other military supplies from certain sources. I have

come to you for two things. I will tell you what they are, but first I must know your mind. You have known me and my brothers for over 20 years. Our families have often met. Dr. Ghulam Nabi knew me well. Hakim Jan is a childhood friend of Amanullah, but he must realize that the King is on the run and is not acceptable to the people at large. Anyway the question of succession can be settled later. If Amanullah wants the throne back and wins acceptance of the people he is welcome to continue. If not, let us leave the decision to the Afghan jirga. I am not for or against Amanullah. I am for my country. It is for the sake of the country, for Amir Habibullah's country, that I ask for your help."

Ghulam Muhammad, helped by Hakim Jan who had large business interests in Kabul and spent several months there every year, was already well briefed about the situation. But he wondered how he, a retired Indian doctor, could help Nadir conquer the country.

"Nadir Khan, Amir Habibullah was good to Ghulam Nabi and myself. My brother died three years ago. I am still alive. Tell me how I can be of help to you."

"I need some money; in fact, a lot of money. My men are at this moment contacting some wealthy businessmen in the city to collect funds. I don't know with what success. If you can finance me as much as your resources allow I solemnly promise to return the amount twice over."

"I am not a rich man. But most of what I have has come from what I earned in Afghanistan and its investment income since I retired. It is all yours. I have no property in Peshawar. I live in a rented house. My houses in Batala and Amritsar won't bring much and can't be sold in a hurry. I have some money in the bank, and some more can be called in at short notice from tradesmen who have not paid for what I have supplied them."

"How much will it come to? All of it?"

"Give me three days and I can arrange two lakh rupees."

"That is excellent. I can wait for three days." The remark showed how desperate Nadir was for the cash.

"What is your second need?"

"Medical supplies. I immediately need medicines, injections, bandages, all the medical paraphernalia required to fight a war. How much can you provide without delay?"

"Look Nadir. I will empty the shop for you. Bring your trucks and lorries tomorrow and take away what there is."

"But how will you manage? You have a large family to feed and support."

"My credit is good in the wholesale medical market. I can order supplies and pay for them later. If the worst comes to the worst I can sell the little property I have in Batala and Amritsar and open a clinic and treat patients. I am a doctor, you know. And then Hakim Jan has made good as a businessman and can give me some support."

"Hakim Jan, can you chip in? Should I expect any help from you?"

"But, of course. The maximum that I have is one lakh. I am withholding fifty thousand for running our home and for emergencies."

"You have given me more than I had hoped for. How self-sacrificing you can be."

Nadir Khan had tears in his eyes as he embraced Ghulam Muhammad and Hakim Jan. The other brothers did the same. They sat down again, and Nadir said.

"I am sure you know that you are gambling away your life savings. If I lose the war, you will be ruined. Do you fully realize the risks you are running?"

"Yes, Nadir Khan. But it all came from Afghanistan. It is not a sacrifice. It is a debt paid back. And then, you know better than I, all life is a gamble. You are putting your head on the line. I am merely parting from my worldly goods."

"All right. All is Allah's will. If I lose, I take you down with me. Even then think well of me. If I win, you will have

my undying gratitude, and double the money you have lent me. God bless you."

Insufficiently financed and inadequately armed Nadir and his brothers set out to reclaim a country and win a throne. Initially there were many difficulties and disappointments. On 25 September they launched their main offensive against Bacha Saqqa. The attack was successful. On 6 October the bandit Amir's troops were defeated. On 9 October Shah Wali Khan, along with the head of the Waziri tribe, entered Kabul. On the 10th. Bacha Saqqa's citadel was assaulted. It was a dangerous and brave thing to do because the families of the Musahiban brothers were held hostage there. According to one report, Nadir's wife sent a secret letter to her husband, urging him to do his duty regardless of their safety. On the 13th. the citadel fell, though Bacha Saqqa himself escaped. On the 15th. Nadir entered the capital. On the 19th. a large jirga proclaimed him king. He acquiesced and the country had a new king.

Hakim Jan has been mentioned by Poullada, Vartan Gregorian and some other modern historians of Afghanistan, but without giving the story I have told above. Professor Leon B. Poullada of the Northern Arizona University, in his *Reform and Rebellion in Afghanistan, 1919-1929*, Cornall University Press, 1973, lists in the bibliography a book entitled *Afghanistan in the Melting Pot*, Civil & Military Gazette Press, Lahore, by one C.Moorish. He says in a footnote on page 140: "Moorish is a pseudonym probably for M.A.Hakim, a wealthy Afghan merchant living in Peshawar, who was anti-Amanullah and later acted as liaison between the British and Nadir Khan." This is confusing. Hakim Jan was not an Afghan. He was a good friend of Amanullah. In any case, Poullada himself uses the word "probably" and does not produce any evidence for his statements. I have tried to get a copy of this book by Moorish but failed.

As soon as Nadir Shah had consolidated his hold over the political and administrative machinery of the state, he fulfilled his promise given to Ghulam Muhammad and Hakim Jan in Peshawar. Both received the double of what they had given him. In addition, as a proof of his gratitude for the grave risk Ghulam Muhammad had run, Nadir Khan (now King Nadir Shah) granted a pension of one thousand British Indian rupees to Ghulam Muhammad and his seven succeeding generations. The pension was received by him till his death in 1946, then by his eldest son, Hakim Jan, till his death in 1963, then by his elder son, Asghar Ali, till his death on 9 April 1972, and finally by his younger brother, Azhar Ali, till King Zahir Shah was dethroned and exiled to Rome. The small role that my family played in Afghan history was well rewarded.

Hakim Jan had started his business in Kabul and Peshawar soon after his father's retirement. His friendship with King Amanullah, and the resulting connections with those who mattered in official circles, including the Musahiban brothers, was of great help. He prospered under Amanullah and even more under Nadir Shah.

After Nadir Shah's assassination on 8 December 1933 he closed down his trading activities in Kabul and shifted to Lahore. But his relations with King Zahir Shah were close and warm, and in the 1950s, on the request of his old friend of Peshawar days, Iskander Mirza, he tried to bring about a rapprochement between Afghanistan and Pakistan on the issues of the Durand Line and the Pakhtunistan issue, but with no results.

Hakim Jan had developed very friendly relations with all the Muhasiban brothers, but specially with Shah Wali and Shah Mahmud, both of whom visited him in Lahore every winter for one or two weeks. At the same time he did not lose touch with Amanullah and Surayya. He visited them in Rome whenever he was in Europe. They wrote to each other

regularly, and Hakim Jan showed me a large bundle of letters received from the royal couple between 1930 and Amanullah's death. They were written in Persian and most of them ran to 2 or 3 pages. The two friends died within three years of each other: Amanullah in April 1960 in Zurich and Hakim Jan in January 1963 in Lahore. Amanullah also wrote many letters to Ghulam Nabi between 1917 and 1926, and later to Abdul Aziz. All these were lost in 1947.

My own family, that is Ghulam Nabi's children, had little contact with Nadir Khan or his brothers or their families once it had left Kabul, except that when Shah Wali and Shah Mahmud came to Lahore to stay with Hakim Jan in his house at the cantonment end of Jail Road, and wanted to see Ghulam Nabi's son my father went and lunched with them. Twice I accompanied him. That was all.

But with Amanullah my family had developed unexpected but unbreakable bonds of love. The sentiment ran strong on both sides. The links were forged by circumstances and coincidences. But the main character in the working of this strange magnetism was Nur.

Amanullah was Hakim Jan's friend and often, disregarding protocol, called at his house or came with him to play there. One day the two boys crossed over through the interconnecting door to Ghulam Nabi's house, and the Prince met Zuhra, Nur and Zainab. His manners were excellent. He was polite and showed great respect to Zuhra; in the first meeting even genuflecting and bowing to her.

"You should not do that, Shahzada (Prince) sahib. You are the son of the Amir", said Zuhra.

"No 'Shahzada sahib', please, Begum sahiba. I am the Amir's son. But in this house I am Hakim Jan's friend and therefore your grandson", replied Amanullah.

Zuhra expostulated with him and was very reluctant to do anything which went against the protocol. Nur and Zainab were watching the scene and hearing the

conversation. With bated breath they waited to see how the remonstration ended. Amanullah went on insisting on establishing an unusual intimacy with Ghulam Nabi's family and finally won the point.

"So it is decided. Nobody in this house will address me as Shahzada. I am from now onwards an honorary member of Doctor sahib's family."

Zuhra agreed and put her hand on the Prince's head and kissed his forehead, and then introduced him to Nur and Zainab. And then the miracle happened. With Nur he had an immediate and spontaneous attachment. The 14-year old boy fell in love with the 56-year old matron. In a magical moment a chord was struck, a spark jumped the gap between them, and a relationship was suddenly achieved, so warm, so deep, so intense, so impervious to time and circumstance and rank.

God knows what lay behind the flash. Maybe he had not received that deep affection he expected from his own mother; that is why he was over-indulgent to his own children and to his favourite sister Nur-as-Siraj. Maybe he saw something in Nur's eyes which signalled the immediate establishment of a mother-son relationship. Zainab always called Nur Amman; hearing that Amanullah also began to call her by the same title, though the word is Punjabi, not Persian. A little later he started addressing Zainab as Apa or elder sister; she was 6 years senior to her in age.

In the following years Amanullah, or rather Aman as he came to be called by the women, was a frequent visitor to Ghulam Nabi's house. He would come and sit near Nur and talk about his palace life, sometimes railing at its rigid and meaningless protocol and restrictions, his interests and hobbies, his plans to go to Europe and study the people there, and many other things. And when Nur said he should come more often he took her at her word. Often he would come at midday, with or without Hakim Jan, now mostly without him, as if asserting his

independent affiliation with the house. He would ask what the servants had cooked that day for lunch, and insisted on eating with the family. Occasionally Ghulam Nabi would drop in for lunch, and Amanullah, aware of the doctor's punctilious sense of protocol, would put himself at his best and most correct behaviour. Throughout these years he never sat down if Ghulam Nabi was standing and showed him as much respect as he did to the Amir, his father. Once Ghulam Nabi told him not to be so formal to the employee of his father and received the proper but affectionate reply, "Doctor sahib, you may be a servant of my father, though you are not, you are his courtier; but the point is that I have called Amman Nur my mother and she is your wife. By that logic I am your son and must give you the respect which is your right according to this relationship. Anyway, you are my elder and in our family we are taught never to sit down when our elders are standing. You know, I behave exactly in the same way with Amman Nur." Ghulam Nabi kissed him on both eyes and blessed him.

One day he said he would prefer to eat something prepared by Nur rather than by the cooks; he was bored with the servants' cuisine, he said. Next day Nur, who rarely entered the kitchen in Kabul, made some kebabs and two purely Punjabi curries for him. He gorged himself with the fare, and threatened or promised that he would come more often and send a herald a day earlier to give her due notice. Soon afterwards he asked Zainab to cook what she liked for him. They ate together and talked for a long time. On some days he arrived followed by a few servants carrying some dishes. On inquiry he said that this was European food prepared by the French cook in the palace, and he wanted to share it with the family. That is how Nur and Zainab had their first soups and steaks and puddings; Zuhra did not relish the new food. Sometimes he would bring jars of jellies and jams and marmalades and ask the family to have them at breakfast for a change.

One day when Zuhra was telling Amanullah about their Bahawalpur life she looked towards Nur and said, "Have you told Aman about the Nur Palace?" The prince was intrigued and asked, "Nur Palace? What was that? Did she have a palace of her own in Bahawalpur?" Then Nur told her that there was a Nur Palace in Bahawalpur for the guests of the Nawab, and she used to tell everyone in jest that in fact the Nawab had made it for her but she couldn't leave her husband and live separately. Aman laughed at the joke, and then said, "Amman. I have a better offer to make. When I am the King I will appoint you the Governor of Nuristan [a far-flung province of Afghanistan]. You will live there in great luxury. Bhai Abdul Aziz, when he comes back, need not practise law. He will be quite happy as the Governor's son."

Then he became serious. "How interesting", he said, "that I also have a Nur in the palace. Do you know that?" Nur said she did not. "But she is my sister", he continued, "She is Nur-as-Siraj, my dear darling little sister. You must meet her. I will bring her here one day. You will like her. She is so beautiful." When he was talking about Nur-as-Siraj his eyes were shining with pleasure. A few days later a large black limousine arrived, the street was cleared of all traffic and people, a lady in a burqa stepped out daintily, entered the vestibule, and as soon as the outer door was closed, removed her burqa, and lo and behold! there was Nur-as-Siraj, dressed up to the nines in the most elegant and expensive gown that Paris could provide. She turned out to be as charming as her brother and as friendly, talking a great deal about Aman and his ambitions and his love for her. Zuhra, Nur and Zainab liked her immensely and asked her to visit them again, which she did.

On another occasion, when Amanullah heard of Zainab's taking lessons in English he said to her,

"Apa. What is this that I hear? Are you serious about learning the language?"

"Yes, I am"

"I can see only two possibilities of its proper use. One, that your husband brings with him a second wife, an English woman, and you will be able to converse with her without a language barrier. Two, that you plan to go to Europe one day and find it easy to talk to people there."

Zainab laughed and said that she would be quite content to impress her husband with her knowledge of English.

These sittings with Amanullah gave Nur unclouded joy. On every visit she wove wreaths of smiles for him. These sessions went on as long as Nur lived in Kabul. The letter Amanullah wrote to Ghulam Nabi on Nur's death had been preserved by my grandfather, and one day in Batala when I knew little Persian my father brought it out of the safe, read it out and translated the entire text for my benefit. He and I had tears in our eyes and realized the depth of Amanullah's love for Nur and his happiness at being near her. He remembered and mentioned what Nur used to cook for him and recalled how they had met on good fare and the joy it had give him.

It is for this reason that my family developed such a strong sentimental relationship with Amanullah. When Amir Habibullah was assassinated in 1919, Nur was dead, but my mother wrote to Amanullah separately from my grandfather; she said she owed it to Nur, and received a separate reply. Hearing so much about the Prince from my parents and Hakim Jan, and without ever having seen or met him, I look at him with affection and respect as if he were a member of my family. Therefore I should like to say something about his life and death and tragedy.

Born on 2 June 1892, Amanullah was taught by a series of tutors in Eastern and Western subjects. While still in his teens he had a legal liaison with Pari Gul, a lady-in-waiting to his mother; the result was a son born in 1911, Hidayatullah. His first proper marriage was with Surayya, daughter of the famous liberal and radical journalist and the intellectual leader

of the national modernist movement, Mahmud Tarzi. Surayya looked a queen – beautiful, elegant, intelligent and full of modern ideas. Forsaking purda and wearing chic European clothes she tried to set an example for the ladies of the higher circles. She accompanied Amanullah on his European tour. By uncovering her face and going around Kabul in an open motor car she offended the susceptibilities of the conservative many and gave a fillip to the anti-Amanullah movement which in time was to lead to his loss of throne.

He succeeded his father on 20 February 1919. In 1927 he went abroad on a European tour with Surayya. His obsession to modernize his nation on Western lines and do it in a hurry, combined with intrigues by his brothers and lack of support by the armed forces led by his kinsmen, Nadir Khan and his brothers, produced a widespread tribal unrest which finally, in 1929, led to his fleeing the country.

A man of pregnant parts, to his age and land he was a messenger of change and a stormy petrel. Enamoured of modern gadgets and fond of everything Western, he talked incessantly of change, rode at breakneck speed in motor cars, spent money on photographic equipment, and had a demonic desire to push his people into the twentieth century regardless of whether they liked it or not. He tried to force an era out of its time. In his personal life he was a good Muslim, an affable man, a voracious reader, a loyal friend, dignified in his bearings and yet humble, and a very good chess player, a game which he had learnt from Ghulam Muhammad. He learnt jugglery from Manna, a servant Ghulam Muhammad had brought from Amritsar, who was a past master of the art of sleight of hand. During his tour of England, Amanullah repeated some of the juggler's tricks at the reception given to him by the Mayor of Liverpool whom he left struck dumb.

When Abdul Aziz returned from Europe in 1908 and went to Kabul to see his parents Amanullah met him and

they had several long sessions in which the Prince plied my father with question after question about almost every aspect of Western life. He was particularly interested in the working of a genuine, stable and efficient parliamentary government under a monarchy. My father, trained in law, told him whatever he could about English constitutional law and practice and the British democratic tradition. The eager hearer had the capacity to absorb a plethora of facts without asking for them to be repeated. On his return from his European tour he invited Ghulam Muhammad, Hakim Jan (who spent several months every year in Kabul) and Abdul Aziz to Kabul and made them his guests at the palace for a week. He thanked Abdul Aziz, whom he called Bhai sahib (he spoke fluent Urdu), for what he had told him about European life in 1908, saying that he had found it very useful during his foreign tour This was the last meeting between Amanullah and any member of my family.

Amanullah was a man easy to smile, laughter always lurking behind his lips and eyes waiting to be summoned. His family life was happy and rewarding. His three full sisters (daughters of Ulya Hazrat) were betrothed to Nadir Khan's brothers. One was a daughter by adoption, the child of a wife who had died bearing her, and Ulya Hazrat, at Amir Habibullah's request, had made no distinction between this girl and her own daughters. She was married to Shah Mahmud, the stocky square-faced brother. Another sister was married to Shah Wali, the tall, slim brother with a jaunty air whom the British ambassador in Kabul described as a *beau sabreur*.

The third sister, the pampered child of the family and Amanullah's favourite sibling, Nur-as-Siraj, was bespoken to Hashim Khan, at this time the governor of Jalalabad. People loved this attractive girl, and she returned it freely. She had had a good education. However strict and formal the purda in the palace in the presence of the servants, in excursions outside the palace, she, in company with her

sisters, wore some sort of a veil before her face, but her dress and shoes were from the best coutourières of Paris. Within their own circle and the Amir's friends and courtiers, the sisters met men and talked with them freely. Nur-as-Siraj met foreign diplomats and mixed well. Not unnaturally Hashim fell in love with her. For him she was not the bride-to-be but his beloved.

But Amanullah did not like the proposed match. He had not objected to the betrothal, but later gave the matter much thought, and found Hashim too old for his little sister. She was only 19. Finally the betrothal was cancelled, and Amanullah married Nur-as-Siraj to Hasan Jan, the son of his first cousin Muhammad Umar. The wedding took place in 1926. None of the Musahiban brothers attended it. Hashim was heartbroken and never married anyone else. Nadir took it badly and considered it as an indignity to his family. Hashim went away to Europe and stayed there a long time, travelling from capital to capital. Amanullah had made several bad enemies, and this was to prove tragic at the end.

Having lost their throne Amanullah and Surayya went for a short while to Istanbu. and then spent the rest of their lives in Rome: Italy had been the most hospitable and indulgent of the European states which Amanullah had visited during his tour as king. They took six children to Rome and had two more there.

As former royalty and friends of the King of Italy they were forced to maintain a certain social position. But soon they faced straitened circumstances. Sale proceeds of the personal jewellery they had brought from Afghanistan did not last long and there was not enough money to go around. During Nadir Shah s rule and for some years under King Zahir Shah the exiles had a really bad time. Finally the Afghan ambassador in Italy reported to his government that Amanullah was living in "cruel poverty". On hearing this the cabinet sanctioned him an allowance. His relatives in

Afghanistan were permitted to visit him, and they and other friends in Kabul who had seen the former king and queen brought back touching stories of their love for Afghanistan. Surayya told a man who tarried at the threshold of the house to wipe his shoes, "Oh, don't wipe off the soil of Afghanistan". With moist eyes and trembling lips Amanullah would inquire about the present state of the various quarters of Kabul. "Is that mosque still standing?" "Is that street still full of shops and people?" "Are the winters still too cold?" "Is the road to Jalalabad in good state?" and so on.

The couple taught Persian to their children. The years passed. The children grew up. One daughter went to England and qualified as a physician. The eldest son, Rahmatullah, took two doctorates and started two boys' schools. Ihsanullah became an engineer and worked for the United Nations. Surayya's father, once a one-man force to be reckoned with in Afghanistan, spent his last years in Istanbul, riding on public conveyances and making notes for articles which were never written. He died in the ancient Ottoman capital. Inayatullah fell dead of a heart attack in his garden in Tehran. Amir Habibullah'a family and Amir Abdur Rahman's grandchildren were dying one by one. The Great Reaper was at work.

Early in 1960 Amanullah went to a clinic in Zurich in Switzerland with a liver problem to be diagnosed and treated. There, on 26 April, he left this world at the age of 68. In Zurich at the end his beloved little sister, Nur-as-Siraj, now a 53-year old matron, sat there in the clinic room, knowing that he was dying, storing up the image of his face for the time when he won't be before her, kneeling near his bed, whispering her last soft words, muffled sibilants, hearing his final phrases until there was no breath to breathe. She closed his eyes with trembling hands, screamed and fell unconscious. He had been a smiling prince for 27 years, a troubled king for 10, and a poor exile for 31.

The dead body was escorted by an Italian guard of honour to a plane which took it to Afghanistan. In Jalalabad it had been planned that his half brothers would carry the coffin to the grave. These brothers were pushed aside with gestures which spoke volumes of contempt by tribesmen who carried him to his last resting place. There, in the garden, next to his father, the last true King of Afghanistan was buried in his own soil. His last wish was fulfilled. The chill of the absolute hangs over the grave.

The tomb is a half cylinder of cement to one side of the marble lace marker beneath which Amir Habibullah is buried. A similar cylinder marks the tomb of Inayatullah. No names appear on any tomb. Visitors reported that till the Soviet occupation of the country every day a fresh flower was to be seen on Amanullah's tomb and another on his father's.

Woe to him who teaches faster than man can learn. Amanullah had ascended the throne full of promise, also full of portent. The future lay bright on the horizon, but the horizon was hidden by dark, threatening clouds. His roaring radicalism and passion for change proved his undoing. All his reforms were misinterpreted by his enemies and the reactionary elements of the tribes and presented to the public in distorted shapes. Rumour travelled like a forest fire, faster than the truth. The movement against him grew sinews. The enmity of the Musahiban brothers put a seal on his future. He who aspired to become the Mustafa Kamal Ataturk of Afghanistan forgot that his country was still in the medieval age. In his exile the twinge of obscurity and poverty was sharp, but the sting of failure was sharper. He whose charm used to bewitch everyone, and whose jokes tripped gaily from his lips, passed from silence into silence into the end of oblivion.

With Amanullah's death my family's connection with the Afghan royal family, which had begun in Peshawar in March 1885, ended after 75 years

Amanullah's mother, Ulya Hazrat, died a few years later after his son's demise. Surayya died in Rome on 21 April 1968. Once again the Italians staged a royal ceremonial farewell for the former queen. Once again a plane carried a coffin to Kabul and a military aircraft flew her body to Jalalabad. She was buried just outside the little pavilion where her husband lay in eternal sleep.

All are dead like autumn leaves floating on the stream of time. Joys, triumphs, mistakes, sorrows, regrets – all are gone.

Words have unimaginable power. They can create a new world and recreate an old one. Memory is the greatest gift we have been given, next to life itself. When memory inspires the words the result is a living, breathing story. I never saw Nur and Amanullah, only heard of their "romance" from my mother. Yet my mind can re-enact the affectionate scenes in the Kabul household, of Nur feeding the smiling young Prince and the boy telling her so much about his life and ambitions. Nur doted upon this adopted son, the son returned her affection in double measure. And for me the Prince Charming, who called my grandmother Amman and sat in her lap and demanded something to eat, and called my mother Apa, is still alive. After my blood relations, he is the only figure whom I never saw but who is my hero. Today, 45 years after he died, at least one heart still beats a little faster when his name is mentioned, and sends out a prayer for him – my *mámun* by love, though not by blood, a heroic tragic figure, a restless soul, who drank bitterly from the well of life, who saw his ideals in ruin, but who loved his motherland and my grandmother.

This was my family's little thread in the warp and woof of Afghan history.

4

FATHER: 1884-1970

BIRTH AND EDUCATION IN INDIA:

1884-1904

Ghulam Nabi and Nur had been married in 1870 and till 1883 they had had five daughters in a row. The eldest had been named Barkat (blessing, auspicious beginning) and she lived up to her given name. She was followed by a procession of daughters. The first break in the clockwise arrival of girls came when my father was born in Peshawar on Thursday, 24 January 1884 at 6 P.M.

With the exception of the Western society of the last 70 years or so, the birth of a male child has always been an occasion of unbounded joy and rejoicing. Social scientists usually account for this phenomenon by an argument from economics. Since time out of mind the family has been in need of as many working hands as possible. The more the boys a woman bears the greater the production capacity of the family. The point is valid as far as it goes, but it does not go very far.

Sociological and anthropological studies of ancient, medieval and modern societies mention many other reasons for this preference for a male child. Collectively they add up

to a proposition which is more psychological than anything else. The economic reason, postulated so vigorously by the experts, ignores the fact that in all ages daughters and wives have worked side by side with their fathers and husbands in fields and jungles, and in our own times in factories and offices. An ultimate argument rejects the point. If most families had only male children, wouldn't the human race die out within a century?

Mankind has always lived as a patriarchal society (matriarchy has merely been a rare and brief eccentricity, a departure from the norm), and a male-dominated world must depend on its boys and men for its perpetual ascendancy. Of course, it needs women for pleasure and procreation and, in equal measure, for literature (especially poetry). Patriarchal succession works through the sons. From the nuclear family to the greatest empire every social and political organization and structure needs an heir to take the place of the father, the tribal leader, the chief, the satrap, the king and the emperor. This need is imperative and overrides all substitutes and alternatives. History has been made by men (though, being men, we want to forget that in many cases these catalysts of history had, behind them, the mighty force, influence or inspiration of a woman). Men have formed families, joined divided clans, founded or split tribes, carved out principalities, conquered countries, created empires. The male of the species continues to mould the world nearer to his heart's desire. Or, so he seems to think.

Man's capacity to make a fool of himself is infinite. Because he carries a sword, he thinks all power lies in its blade. Nothing else matters. He has a divine right to feel superior because God himself made him a male. In his obsession with his maleness he forgets that his greatest devotion is to his mother and his deepest love for his beloved – both women. Now take another step forward. When not

asserting his maleness in battles, forays, hunting, wrestling and other displays of brute strength he relaxes in two ways. The animal in him by making love to women; the chaste and refined spirit in him by reading literature (over the ages mostly poetry). Not much poetry of the highest sensibility has been or can be written without love – love of a woman. Man knows all this *but*, ever a chauvinist male, in his wonted sensibility he pretends to be unaware of the greatest force in human affairs. He prides himself on not letting his heart rule his head. Poor self-deluded nincompoop?

Notwithstanding all this, society, especially in the East, prefers the son to the daughter. In ancient Arabia fathers buried their daughters alive. Today husbands divorce their wives because they can't produce a male child. Yet we call ourselves modern. Progress indeed!

All said and done, society has surrendered to the mystique and charm of having a male child. It has become a part of its psyche. It is an irrational instinct arising from the deep of the heart – beyond understanding or explanation, but overpowering, incontestable and compulsive. For its sake man breaks up his home, ruins the life of his wife, puts his daughters to torture, alienates his relatives, often breaks his mother's heart, and brings misery to many around him. This happens everyday among people we know. We prefer not to notice it and go our way.

In any other family the failure of the wife to produce a male child in 13 years of married life would have caused a crisis. Beginning with scowls and frowns, proceeding to sneers and jibes, and ending with candid references to a divorce, the future of the wife would have been darkened. But the family of Ghulam Nabi and Nur was far from being ordinary. Ghulam Nabi was a deeply religious man with a faith in God which few could match in strength. As a Muslim and a physician he knew that the sex of the child was not determined by the wife. He was also a loving husband, for

whom Nur was not just a wife but the beat of his heart. Many years ago when she had taken charge of his life and by her charm and winning ways changed it beyond his imagination, he had recognized in her not only a life partner but an enchantress with a magical touch. In her words was the mute persuasion of unkindled melodies. Love was the thing stitching them closer together. It had warmed to ripeness by the test of time. Man and wife were happy and would continue to be happy regardless of the seemingly unending procession of daughters. Every one was a little afraid of Ghulam Nabi and dared not say a word against Nur.

Zuhra, the mother-in-law, could have been, and given the social mores of the time, should have been, the first to show her displeasure. Didn't she want her second and favourite son to have a male child? She certainly did. But she was intelligent and understanding. She had the sense to realize that it was not Nur's fault. Even if Ghulam Nabi took a second wife would that guarantee the birth of a son. She could not imagine that a couple bound together with such strong love and devotion could be made to separate, no matter what the reason or the reward.

Zuhra had another reason for not giving the matter any thought. She owed to Nur a great debt which could never be cleared off in full. When Waziruddin died and Zuhra came close to losing her mind, it was Nur who had during the months of crisis nursed Zuhra back to the world of living, not by soft words of solace which were also on the lips of so many others, but by using her innate psychological skills. She had rekindled Zuhra's interest in life by persuasion and eloquence, made her smile and then laugh with her, cook and dress well, visit people, invite guests and attend weddings and other joyful gatherings. She had made a merry woman of her again. It had been like a second birth, a new existence, a fresh world of beautiful things and people. After this miracle Zuhra and Nur had

become sisters and friends. The one being a mother-in-law and the other a daughter-in-law were accidents of an arranged relationship. The essence lay in the union of hearts. With all this before her she could not even imagine a situation in which she could utter a word of disfavour against Nur and break her heart.

As was expected, the only discordant note was struck by Sharfo, who expressed her sorrow and disappointment that Ghulam Nabi did not have a son. And once, only once, she made a spiteful reference to a possible divorce. In delirious fury Zuhra chided her elder sister and promised that if she heard another word of criticism from her again that would be the end of her stay in the big haveli. Zuhra had never uttered this threat before. That was enough. Sharfo's mutterings stopped. The household regained its peace and calm.

Knowing my family, I am sure that if Ghulam Nabi had no son at all he and Nur would have gone on living in perfect tranquillity and felicity till the end of their days. But that certainly does not mean that Abdul Aziz's coming into this world was a non-event. The birth of a son after 13 years of marriage called for a grand celebration. Peshawar was a far-away place, yet several members of the clan came from across the Beas to congratulate and express their happiness. A bigger gathering was postponed till Ghulam Nabi had his long leave and the family was in Batala.

In the home Abdul Aziz was more of a plaything than a brother for the five sisters: Barkat (12), Fatima (10), Wazir (8), Amna (6) and Allah Rakhi (3). Barkat and Fatima were occasionally allowed to carry him around. Wazir wondered why she was denied this privilege. But the real danger came from Amna and Allah Rakhi. They were too young to discover any reason for the baby's existence. Anyway, what was he? A boy! Built differently from them. A brother? Did they need one? What scared Nur was the ways adopted by them to express their wonder and affection and to play with

him. They pulled his arms and legs, they pressed his tummy, but the worst was that they poked their fingers into his eyes. When this last manoeuvre took place Nur came running to guard the baby and shouted at the innocent but mischievous girls. This confused the offended offenders even more. Why couldn't they touch and handle him as they liked? Why was mother so protective when it came to him?

Inevitably this curiosity led to envy. Why was everyone so enamoured of the baby? Why were *they* being neglected? The little world of the little children raised questions which their little minds could not answer. Envy, jealousy, confusion, rivalry or whatever they felt was nothing compared to their wonder. They were used to toys. But this toy moved, and sometimes cried, and when he cried the mother came rushing. Why? What was he? They thought and wondered, and Abdul Aziz grew by the month, and the sisters got used to the mobile toy.

One day Nur called the baby "*kaka*", and the sisters lost no time in adopting the sobriquet. Throughout his life and as long as the youngest of the older sisters, Allah Rakhi, was alive, he was the *kaka* of the family. I have heard Barkat calling him that when he was 62 and Allah Rakhi doing the same when he was 81. A younger son was born 5 years later and by the logic of age and language Abdul Aziz should have been stripped of the title of *kaka* and the nickname transferred to the new brother. But this was not done. My father remained *kaka* to these five sisters.

In the conferment of this title I was the true successor of my father. Zuhra and Nur were dead when I was born. But my mother remembered that Nur called her older son *kaka*, followed the tradition, and called me *kaka* from the day I was born till the day before her death: she was in a coma on her last day.

Of course Abdul Aziz was the darling of the family. As the son after five daughters after a long wait of 13 years he

commanded the attention of everyone in the house. Ghulam Nabi, always undemonstrative in showing his feelings, confined himself to kissing him many times a day, but the light in his eyes and the proud glance he transferred from the baby to Nur and back betrayed his happiness. Nur saw a joy blow across his face. Nur's delight was there for everyone to see. Waves of happiness washed over her. She looked after him as if he was her first-born. Every spare moment was reserved for him. Zuhra showered her affection on his grandson, beaming at him, covering him with kisses and hugging him to her breast. He was thoroughly pampered, but not spoilt. Ghulam Nabi's lifelong discipline and reticence and Nur's common sense assured that.

Ghulam Nabi resigned from his post in Peshawar in the following year and the family settled down in Batala. On the New Year day of 1886 Abdul Aziz had a sister, Umrao. Nur kept her promise and on 24 January held a large party to celebrate Abdul Aziz's second birthday, and enable the clan to see her first boy and bless him and to congratulate her on the achievement. It was the biggest gathering since the family's migration to Batala and attracted guests from every branch of the extended family and every place where the diaspora now lived. People came from Kahnuwan, Kaithan, Dasuha, Mukerian, Amritsar, and the villages round about Batala, and from the town itself. There was much festivity and revelling and the baby was passed from hand to hand and lap to lap and arms to arms, kissed by most, coddled by some, hugged by a few, and blessed by all.

The fairy who had presided over his birth had inscribed on the page of the book of his destiny that in his long stay on this earth he will win the friendship of some great men, play with a Nawab, attend several ancient seats of learning, hear wise words from some of the greatest scholars and teachers of the age, meet a King, be adopted as a brother by another King, love books and learning, become a renowned scholar of

history and literature, counted as one of the most widely read men of his time in India, and die in cruel penury at the age of 87 minus a month. The moving finger writes, and having writ moves on. And we are left to read what it has writ.

Next year (1887) Abdul Aziz moved with his family to Bahawalpur where his father was appointed personal physician to the Nawab and Chief Medical Officer of the state. He spent his next ten years there. It was here that he got a brother, Abdul Hamid, on 21 October 1889, and his youngest sister, Sultan, in 1891.

He spent about 18 months at home, playing with his sisters and cousins. Then in the middle of 1888, at the age of four years and a half, his schooling began. Bahawalpur city had one high school, one church mission school and four middle schools. Ghulam Nabi decided to send the boy to the Church Mission School.

He himself had studied at a missionary school in Batala and had been impressed by its quality of teaching and the vigilance and solicitude of its British teachers. There was another reason for selecting this school. The Nawab's elder son and heir apparent, Muhammad Bahawal Khan, who was one year older than Abdul Aziz, was also beginning his education and the Nawab had decided to send him to the missionary school.

Bahawal Khan and Abdul Aziz had been playing together in the palace and its gardens for over a year. The prince often visited the doctor's house and received much affection from Zuhra, Nur and other members of the family. Abdul Aziz was happy that the two friends would now also be class fellows.

The boys were admitted to the school and the academic session began. Now it became a routine that on every weekday two horse-drawn carriages emerged from the main gate of the palace at the same time. One was the royal carriage carrying the prince and two flunkeys in full livery.

The other was the less luxurious and smaller carriage of the personal physician of the Nawab in which sat the young Abdul Aziz and two official attendants in the uniform of the Department of Public Health. The royal carriage was parked in the school precincts, waiting for the closing hour. Abdul Aziz's carriage dropped him at the school and returned to the doctor's official residence from where it took Ghulam Nabi to the office; but the two servants stayed in the school. If the doctor could spare it, his carriage came to the school to take his son home. But Ghulam Nabi had a lot of calls to make, and more often than not his transport was not available, and his son had to come back with Bahawal Khan. In less than a year the alternative became the routine. For eight years the prince and Abdul Aziz returned to the palace together.

In the school the two boys sat at the same double desk, exchanged books and exercise copies, and gossiped during the break. The prince's visits to Ghulam Nabi's house were bound to become more frequent. Gradually he became a regular caller and then an honorary member of the family. Zuhra and Nur gave him much affection. A decade later another prince of another country would do the same and even go further and adopt Nur as his second mother.

Class-consciousness, like racial discrimination, comes with the growing years. Childhood is the age of innocence. The two schoolboys gave no thought to the difference in their background. They were not even conscious of it. They were schoolfellows and playmates, and that was enough. This intimacy was reflected in the language and manner of address: each called the other *tun*, the objective pronoun indicative of informality and close relationship, the Punjabi equivalent of the French *tu* or the German *du*. Abdul Aziz's spoken Punjabi took on some Saraiki colour. All his life he pronounced certain words with a Saraiki inflection.

Though this friendship lasted a lifetime, it was tragically short. In 1897 Abdul Aziz left the school to go to

Batala when his father resigned from the service of the state. At the same time Bahawal Khan went to Lahore to join the Aitchison Chief's College. Occasionally they exchanged letters. Bahawal Khan ascended the Bahawalpur throne in 1903, the year of my father's marriage, and invited Abdul Aziz to his coronation and during the latter's stay treated him like a brother. One day he said,

"Abdul Aziz, now that you have finished your education and are free to regulate your life according to your choice you must come and stay with me here for at least a month every year. We will recall our childhood days. We have so much to talk about."

"But I am leaving for England next year, Bahawal. How would I visit you from London? I can't afford to have a holiday in India every year. Nor would my father allow it."

"Is that so? All right, I will come to London and see you. I have heard wonderful, incredible things about England and its capital London. You would be in London, won't you?"

"Yes. I will be living in London."

"Then I shall visit you and you will show me around and tell me what is what"

They parted on this heart-warming note. Abdul Aziz went away to London in 1904. They wrote to each other when the spirit moved them. Then suddenly in 1907, when Abdul Aziz was still in London, and Ghulam Nabi was serving in Kabul, Nawab Muhammad Bahawal Khan V died in Bahawalpur. He was only 24 years old. Even in his old age my father remembered Bahawal with a catch in his voice. He used to talk to me about their friendship, and at the end always say, "A beautiful loving heart beat in the breast of this prince. I have missed him much all these years."

Abdul Aziz had passed his middle class examination and was in the ninth class in 1897 when he left Bahawalpur. Ghulam Nabi wanted him to enter the aristocratic Baring School in Batala, a public school of high reputation and the

first of its kind in north India. It was in a way the precursor of the Chief's College of Lahore, and in its location and surroundings superior to it. But it was meant exclusively for Christian boys. So Abdul Aziz was sent to his father's old school, A Lady of England High School, where he spent the next year and a half and passed his matriculation examination in 1898 in the first division at the age of 14. He was pleased at the result, but what brought him even greater pleasure and a lot of pride was the sight of the school's Board of Honour. This was a large rectangular piece of highly polished wood, hanging on the wall of the hall, on which were inscribed in gold the names of the students who had topped the school matriculation examination results since its establishment, arranged by the year of the result. On this list there was only one Muslim name, Ghulam Nabi, under the year 1868. My father took hold of any passing student he could, chaperon him to the hall, and show him that name and then proudly tell him that he was his father.

There was no college in Batala, and Ghulam Nabi was thinking where to send Abdul Aziz and what arrangements to make for his board and lodging when suddenly he decided to go to Amritsar himself and join the medical practice of his brother Ghulam Muhammad. This solved the problem of Abdul Aziz's further education. Parting from his grandmother, mother, brother and sister, he accompanied his father to Amritsar where he joined the Municipal Board Intermediate College.

His two years at this college were unhappy. Several factors contributed to this state of mind. So far he had attended Christian missionary schools in Bahawalpur and Batala and benefited from their high standard of English language teaching and their general method of instruction which combined strict discipline with deep interest in the students' welfare. All those who taught English had learnt it on their mothers' knees. They also had degrees from good

British universities. They had been trained to teach those who knew no English, and therefore to take care in enunciating every word with clarity of sound and accent and correct pronunciation. This made these schools ideal for a native to learn the language. As English was taught from class one the foundation was well laid. Teachers of other subjects were either British or had attended good missionary schools, and their English rated as between satisfactory and good; it was certainly not of the local variety.

The other advantage lay in the way the school treated the students. True that the school was not residential, though a small minority of students lived in the hostel, but in all other respects it tried to model itself on the British public school system in which character building and academic instruction went hand in hand. The object was not to produce a "matriculate" or a graduate but a young gentleman, and it was achieved, not by verbal moralizing and didactic lectures, but by example and encouragement. Discipline was strict, but not brutal. There were only a few rules, but they were enforced without discrimination or making exceptions. The moral improvement of the student carried as much weight as his examination record. Physical courage was inculcated through sports, and moral stamina through example. All this was only possible through a close and friendly relationship between the teacher and the student. The student was persuaded to respect his teacher, to render honour to him, even to love him, not to stand in awe of him or fear him or hate him.

The rewards of this system were plentiful. Barring a few abnormal cases, the student left the school with a sound knowledge of English, a good grounding in other subjects, some training in dealing with other human beings through interacting with their fellows in the classroom and playing with them on the sports ground. He also left the school with an abiding memory of the days he had spent there. His stay was not an interlude but a memorable

landmark of his life. Whatever his religion, the one supreme lesson he had learnt was to acknowledge the sovereignty of the moral law and try to live by it.

The Municipal Board College of Amritsar was a brand new institution, and Abdul Aziz was among the first group of entrants. It started working on 16 May 1888 to facilitate higher education in the city and the region because at that time there was only one public college, the Government College in Lahore, and students found it expensive to leave their homes and live in the hostel in Lahore. In fact, it was the old Municipal Board School elevated to the level of a college. The college classes were held in the school building. It was centrally located, near the town hall and the Sikh Golden Temple. It had no boarding house, but if any boy required accommodation he was put up in the school hostel. There were only about a dozen students in this first group of young hopefuls.

The subjects taught were English, mathematics, science, history, philosophy, Persian, Arabic and Sanskrit. Abdul Aziz chose to study English, history, philosophy and Persian, and was allowed to attend Arabic classes as an informal student, learning it for his private use and not to be examined. The only Englishman was the principal: C. M. C. Carne. Lala Jaisa Ram taught mathematics and philosophy; Babu Jan Muhammad and Babu Ahmad Din history; and Maulavi Nur Bakhsh Persian and Arabic, the only teacher to have a master's degree. The Principal himself taught English. Except the oriental languages, all subjects were taught and examined in English.

For the boy who had spent ten years in good missionary schools, the Municipal Board College of Amritsar was a different world. All teachers were native, except the Principal. Native standards were the rule. The language used was one which had only a few things in common with what he had known as English in Bahawalpur and Batala. There was

hardly any interaction with the teachers. The entire exercise consisted of attending lectures, taking notes, learning the textbooks by rote, and at the end of every term taking an examination which tested neither one's intelligence nor one's capacity to think. Abdul Aziz found it boring, tedious, unexciting, dreary, monotonous and oppressive.

Bad schooling was only one cause of his frustration. There were personal disenchantments too. He had no family life in Amritsar. Ghulam Nabi had rented a house in which he and his son lived by themselves. The presence of four servants did not make it a home. Ghulam Muhammad lived nearby with his wife and a very young daughter. There was nothing there to attract Abdul Aziz. There were a half dozen relatives in the city and occasionally he visited them with his father. That was the full measure of his social life. He had no friends. Even the city was a stranger. For him it had no memories of times past, no familiar places. It was a big city, only next to Lahore in size and population. The streets were full of people. There were many noises and sounds. Children played in the streets. Men sauntered in the Company Bagh. But all this meant nothing to him. Sometimes he went to the railway station to break the monotony of his life. He saw trains arriving from Lahore, disgorging a part of their load, taking aboard more passengers and pulling out towards Batala.

Batala. His heart ached the more. It was now not only the exile in Amritsar that bruised his heart but also the lure of Batala. He and his father visited Batala on the average about twice a month. He himself spent the long vacation there. But the pain of separation from the family was not assuaged by these brief encounters. The agony did not go away.

He missed everyone who lived in the big haveli. The loving and lovable grandmother Zuhra, the younger brother Hamid who was at the ALOE school, the little sister Sultan, her playmate and friend, the servants whom he had known

since the first dawning of his consciousness and who had looked after him with the affection and care characteristic of family retainers. He missed them all.

But more, far more, than all men and women and things and places he missed his mother. Nur had been very close to him, and he to her. He had come late in her life, and he was a boy. That was reason enough for her to cherish, foster and over-indulge him. But in Peshawar and Bahawalpur Nur stayed home most of the time. There were no houses to visit, except the Gulzar Palace in Bahawalpur to see the Nawab's ladies, but that was not often. This gave the boy ample time to be with his mother. Even when Hamid was born, and being the younger was entitled to greater attention, Nur's first love remained Abdul Aziz. He had visited Batala from Amritsar quite frequently, but found the arrangement even more tantalizing. He wanted to be with Nur all the time. His uncle, Ghulam Muhammad, was full of affection for him and kissed and hugged him at every meeting, no matter even if they met thrice a day. But nothing could take the place of the mother. The boy was languishing in Amritsar for the maternal touch.

After a 2-year stay in Amritsar events took a turn when Ghulam Nabi decided to abandon his practice and returned to Batala. Abdul Aziz was reunited with his mother. But not for long. He had passed his intermediate with a second division and now must go to Lahore to continue his studies. There was no degree college in Amritsar. Mother and son were together for a few weeks before the boy went to Lahore, got admitted to the Forman Christian College, and after a while returned home for the long vacation. The year was 1900.

Ghulam Nabi had decided which college Abdul Aziz should enter. Once again a missionary institution was chosen. He did not even apply for admission to the Government College. The father decided that his studies must continue in a college where most of the teachers were native speakers of English and had a keen interest in the

future of the students. He sent him to the Forman Christian College of Lahore, which I was to join 42 years later.

The college had an interesting history. It was opened in 1866, gave instruction up to the B.A. level, and was affiliated to the Calcutta University. In 1869, due to the death of the principal, Rev. Henry, the work at the college was suspended. The classes were reopened in 1886. In 1889 the college moved from its old premises near Kashmiri Gate to Robert's Road (now Nila Gumbad) into a new building built on a piece of land gifted by the Punjab Government. It was a palatial well-built pile consisting of the main block containing a big hall, the library, the laboratory and several lecture rooms, capable of accommodating 300 students; the Hindu and Muslim boarding houses; Kennedy Hall for Christian students; an extra boarding house on the nearby Napier Road; and the Principal's residence. It was under the care of the Ludhiana Mission of the American Presbyterian Church of the United States. The year my father joined it there were 329 students on the roll, of whom 173 were Hindus, 96 Muslims, 32 Sikhs and 28 Christians. He was allotted a room in the Muslim Hostel.

The Principal was Professor J. C. R. Ewing, who also taught English. Among others on the staff were Professors H. C. Velte (English), J. H. Orbison (biology and English), H. D. Griswold (philosophy and history), and Maulvi R. Sirajuddin (philosophy), H. Ponsonby (history), Maulvi Muhammad Husain (Persian), and Maulvi Muhammad Baqir (Arabic). My father studied English, history and philosophy, and attended Persian and Arabic classes for his private benefit.

At this time the College was in no way inferior to the prestigious Government College. The latter had 225 students and 8 teachers (of whom only 3 were British); the former had 329 students and 12 teachers (of whom 6 were Americans). By its qualifications the F. C. College staff was superior to that of the Government College.

Abdul Aziz found Lahore an exciting place to live and study. The city was as large as his imagination could contemplate. The College occupied a strategic location. On one side lay Anarkali, the Punjab University, the Government College, the Public Library and the Museum; on the other the Mall, the majestic high street, which had some fashionable shops but was yet sparsely built up and proved a quiet but interesting place for a long walk to the magnificent Lawrence Garden and, if a longer exercise was required, to the canal.

He spent most of his afternoons in exploring the city. Whenever, on his way to the walled city, he crossed the Anarkali Bazaar he recalled the adventure his grandmother had had 32 years ago when she had gone there shopping. Zuhra had told him the story in full detail of how she had persuaded Waziruddin to allow the venture, how the boy's father, Ghulam Nabi, had behaved, how she had been thrilled by the new experience, and how, a few years later, Nur had followed her. Now, walking along the same old street, he was amused by his grandmother's remembrance.

His young imagination went on a backward journey. This is the house where his father and uncles lived and were later joined by Nur. He thought of all the long ago things as if they were happening now before his eyes. From here my father walked up to the Medical School every morning, and so did my younger uncles to their schools. Ah! and this is the fabled bazaar where the great adventure came about. He counted the steps from the doorstep of the house to the bazaar. Not too many. Then he entered the bazaar and walked along it very slowly, now looking at the road surface (here my grandmother and mother must have placed their steps, perhaps exactly here where I stand at this moment), now staring at the shops on his right and left, seeking in vain to identify the stores where they had shopped (perhaps this one, it is not too far from the house, or maybe that one, there, it looks like the one grandmother

described to me, or perhaps that particular shop is now gone and replaced by another; oh! what does that matter? the bazaar is the same), now his fancy tickled by the memory of what the women had dared (my own grandmother and mother, how brave of them!), now again concentrating, with a wrinkle on his brow, on finding the shop or shops they had entered (but in vain), now entering a shop just to re-enact the movements of the women (how many steps to climb? did their *burqas* ride up their legs when these hooks came in their way?). So he went on indulging in the reverie. The past and the present meeting. Dream and reality nudging each other. The boy walked on, lost in thought. Finding his family's footsteps in a street which must have changed so much in these long years. He ambled leisurely back to the hostel, satisfied, happy, content. He had walked where his elders had walked once upon a time. He had a strange feeling, as if by walking these few yards he had affirmed his loyalty to the family, relived its history, achieved something of importance.

One Sunday he hired a *victoria* and, starting from Anarkali, retraced as faithfully as he could remember the sightseeing tour his father and grandmother had made, first to the walled city and then back to the district courts, the Tollinton Market and down the Mall right up to the canal. All the landmarks were familiar to him. He had visited them more than once with his friends. But he had to make this journey, for the family's sake, for rewriting the family chronicle in his own characteristic imaginative way. He was showing his intense attachment to the lives of his elders, even when they were still alive. Love of history was in his blood. I am happy that I have inherited the sentiments. I am proud of the legacy.

Once Ghulam Nabi came from Batala to see his son and buy some books. He took the boy with him to Messrs. Rama Krishna, the foremost booksellers of the time, located very

near the Mall Road end of New Anarkali. This was my father's first visit to a bookshop. He had inherited from his father a love of books and spent hours in the family library in the big haveli. But this was a new experience: to see hundreds of books which did not belong to him and to be able to acquire as many of them as he liked or could afford.

Exactly 43 years later, and 4 years before everything left by the Hindus in Pakistan went the way of the wind, my father and I were sitting inside the shop when he told me of his first visit with his father and described what the shop looked like then. Casting my eyes up and around me I found that little had changed in nearly half a century. What he had seen in 1900 or 1901 and what I saw in 1944 were almost the same.

It was an impressive establishment. The double frontage boasted an imposing entrance with a large picture window on either side, and the walls of the three sides of the deep hall were lined with bookcases. On the level of the first floor a wide gallery ran all around, with bookshelves built into the walls, dotted here and there with easy chairs and sofas. The hall and the gallery were covered with a blue carpet. The generously provided seating facility consisted of luxuriously upholstered easy leather chairs and double-seater sofas, all in dark brown. The customers (the proprietor preferred to call them visitors or guests) were invited to walk around, go up, inspect the volumes, and browse for as long as they liked. The owner was a highly educated and cultured man, a girl of whose family, called Lajwanti, later wrote a perceptive book on the Punjabi Sufi poets, the first of its kind in English. The stock of books was large and, what really mattered, chosen with care by a knowledgeable person. I don't know whether Rama Krishna had any literary advisers or he selected the books himself. The shop enjoyed the patronage of the cultural elite of the Punjab and Delhi. Later it opened a branch in Simla which I visited in 1943.

It gave Abdul Aziz a thrill to see and to be allowed to handle so many books, all finely bound, several heavy tomes, and some running into many volumes. He followed his father who taught him how to handle a book with loving care, to run the eye down the table of contents, and to read a few passages or a couple of pages to find out if it interested him, and to shut it gently before putting it back in its original place.

Father and son spent hours at Rama Krishna's and also paid shorter visits to the Punjab Religious Book Society shop, which had been opened as a missionary venture and held only Christian tracts and literature on divinity, but had later developed into a general bookshop. They examined books, browsed and bought what they wanted to. Ghulam Nabi watched the boy and was pleased to see his interest in books. Before he left he deposited one thousand rupees at the Rama Krishna's and opened a credit account for Abdul Aziz. The boy was then 17. From that day he became a book buyer and a lover of learning. Till 1947 he purchased all kinds of books, ordered them from other cities and from abroad, and at the end had built up a library of 25,000 well-chosen volumes catering to his catholic tastes. He stopped acquiring books after August 1947 when he had lost this library and much more in the cruel days of the partition of the Punjab and had no money to buy books or even inexpensive journals and magazines. *Sic transit gloria mundi*.

Ghulam Nabi had hardly any friends in Lahore, and even if he had had Abdul Aziz was too young to call at them. My family had no relatives in the city. Thus Abdul Aziz had no social life except what the college provided. He felt lonely. It was his first experience of living away from the family. He hastened to Batala to be with Nur whenever the college closed. He did not let his solitude fester into a frustration. The newly-acquired love of books saved him from the melancholy that had invaded his mind in Amritsar. He still missed Nur, but tried to keep his mind

focused so intensely on his general reading that he had no vacant time to miss his mother. But he was deceiving himself. He had invented this pretence to save his sanity. His heart hungered for a hug from Nur, a kiss, an embrace, a smile. He promised his heart that all these will soon be his when the holidays came, and read on.

What did he read? During his long vacations in Amritsar spent in Batala he had read as much of Sir Sayyid Ahmad Khan's writings and books on general history and Islam as he could comprehend. Now in Lahore the College library and Rama Krishna's bookshop opened new avenues. He started reading anything that caught his young and immature fancy – advanced works on European history, economics, philosophy and literature. Probably he did not understand even a quarter of what he read. But that did not discourage him. He became a book worm. Within six months he needed reading glasses.

This gainful activity created a serious problem and threatened his academic career. In his in-house promotion examination of 1901 he could barely scrape through. The results stunned him, surprised his teachers and dismayed his father. He took his problem to the Principal who listened to him with patience and sympathy, but told him that he would talk to his teachers and then consider what could be done.

Soon after the establishment of the College the founders had established the practice of having two parents' days a year, in April and December, when the parents (in practice, the fathers only) of the students spent the whole day at the College (which provided the lunch), meeting the teachers and the Principal. The teachers reported on the scholastic performance, sports activities and general conduct of their wards, and put before the parents any problem that the students were creating for themselves, and for the institution. The get-together was very useful. The teachers came to be acquainted with the parents. The parents had a first hand and

up-to-date report on their sons. The college could plan the future of the boys in consultation with the parents and with a fuller knowledge of the family's background.

On the April 1901 parent's day Abdul Aziz's case came up for discussion. What he said can be summarized as follows: I am worried about the results of my examinations. My score is always poor. I read a great deal. I try to understand what I read and to digest it. But somehow my performance in the tests is disappointing. Am I reading the wrong type of books? Is my power of expression deficient or flawed? Why is my hard work not reflected in my results? What should I do?

Ghulam Nabi told the teachers that his son had this problem since he left school. In Amritsar he put in many hours of study and he himself coached him but the result was not as good as he had hoped for.

The teachers had discussed Abdul Aziz's difficulties and apprehensions among themselves after he had seen the Principal. What they said in the meeting amounted to this. Taking the examination is an art. You must be able to identify important topics and themes, and give them more attention. Have a look at the question papers set in the last few years. Spend more time on those parts of the book or those portions of the subject in which you are more likely to be tested. But you must keep in mind one crucial thing. There is no causal relationship between a high score in the tests and sheer ability. It may be that performing well in an examination is not the same thing as gaining knowledge of a subject. Every student who gets high marks is not necessarily an able student, and a poor performer not necessarily an ignoramus. Examination is a balance by which we weigh your standing in the class and in each subject. It is not a divine judgement. We know that your general and extra-curricular study is impressive, also that you are serious beyond your years. You should not lose

heart. Prepare yourself for the examination with a stout heart. Use the textbooks well. Your English is good. Make use of it. Improve it still more by writing essays. Along with this continue with your general reading.

Possibly the 17-year old boy did not read the advice aright. Or, perhaps he did not agree with it. How could a love of reading and wide knowledge fail to show up in the examination results? Or, maybe he did not understand what precisely the teachers were saying. Their counsel did appear to be ambiguous. Or, maybe he misinterpreted what he had been told.

He assumed, rightly or wrongly, that he had only two choices: either to pass the examination with good marks or to augment knowledge by wide reading. Too young yet to know the world, as he told me many years later, he looked with contempt at what he called the "purely material success of passing an examination", and preferred learning to the cultivation of the "tricks and artifices" (the words are his) of shining in the marks sheets. The arrogance of tender youth! And yet, in the ultimate analysis, the essence of wisdom. Am I defending my father without good reason?

He decided to give due but not too much attention to the textbooks and to get on with his general reading. Next year the inevitable happened. He failed the university finals. His fears of being a poor student were proved true.

Ghulam Nabi was distressed. But after talking to his son for a few days, asking questions, and gauging the depth of his knowledge, refrained from issuing a reprimand. Instead, he advised him to amend his scale of values, at least for one year, and for now concentrate on passing the examination. The son gave a solemn pledge to do so.

Almost at the same time he also gave another and a very different pledge. In the spring of 1902 his uncle Ghulam Qadir arrived in Batala from Dodhi with his family on one month's leave. Zuhra, Nur and Ghulam Nabi must have been

planning Abdul Aziz's marriage for some time, but I don't know since when. Now they announced their decision and Ghulam Qadir's eldest child, Zainab, now 16 years old, was betrothed to Abdul Aziz before the visitors returned to Dodhi.

Cousin marriage, particularly between first cousins, was quite common at that time, and so was early marriage. This was true of my family too. Waziruddin, Azizuddin, Ghulam Nabi and Ghulam Qadir had married their cousins. I cannot say if romance played any part in these matches. But as family gatherings and mutual visits were more frequent than they became later, it is reasonable to assume that cousins of opposite sexes developed friendly relations. In some cases this affection of blood might have gone a critical stage further. There had been at least one example of this in Ghulam Nabi's family, though it ended in a tragedy. His daughter Wazir was in love with a cousin from Kaithan, Ali Muhammad, at a startlingly early age. Love had no tongue in those days. She was married off to Umar, a young barrister who practised law in Amritsar. She did not protest before or at the wedding. But she was back in her father's home within a month, saying she could not stand the treatment meted out to her by Umar's sisters. Most people knew what lay behind the separation. A divorce was arranged. Not a word was uttered, then or later. She never married again, lived with her parents and after their death with my father and his brother by turns till her death in 1935. Ali Muhammad married twice and all his life his relations with the rest of the family were perfectly normal, even cordial. In fact, he was very close to my father and till his death came and lived with us in Batala and Lahore for long periods. There was not a breath of scandal.

I am not saying that my father and mother were anything more than cousins. They had not even met each other properly. With Zainab in Dodhi and Abdul Aziz in Bahawalpur and Batala if any mutual feeling took birth it could only have been through telepathy. I never dared talk

about this matter to my parents. But of one thing I am sure beyond any doubt. They were in love with each other all their lives after the marriage, which was more fortunate than a pre-nuptial romance slowly withering away with prolonged living together.

Waziruddin had married Zuhra and found out that she was an ideal chatelaine of his estate in Kahnuwan. She had lived up to his opinion, co-operated with him in educating their sons, however piercing the pain of separation from them, and after his death competently managed the estate, taken all important decisions, and presided over the family with dignity and honour till her death at the advanced age of 86. Ghulam Nabi had married Nur, very reluctantly and with great apprehension, discovered in her a magician who transformed his character, made his mother a personal friend of hers, and made herself popular and respected wherever she lived. He loved her so much that he contemplated suicide when she died. Abdul Aziz entered into an arranged marriage with Zainab, then went abroad for four years leaving her behind to live in a joint family, a situation full of hazards, rejoined her and found in her virtues which not only endeared her to him the more as year succeeded year but also made their companionship a time of bliss. I married purely for love and after nearly half a century still feel intoxicated. For four generations we have had our marriages made in heaven, blessed our wives, and thanked our God for the gifts he sent us in the form of women.

Once the betrothal ceremonies were over and Ghulam Qadir and family left for Dodhi, Abdul Aziz settled to the hard task of preparing for his finals as a private candidate. Opposite the central building of the haveli and separated from it by a large courtyard was a suite of two rooms and a bathroom. This was allotted to him to assure privacy and quiet. He would live there for the next one year and labour on his books. Ghulam Nabi laid down the boy's daily routine. He

came up to the haveli for his breakfast and a brief chat with the family; studied till lunchtime; ate the midday meal in the haveli followed by two hours of rest which he spent with grandmother, mother, father and brother; back to work till late afternoon, and then Ghulam Nabi took him out for a 5-mile walk outside the town through fields and rough pathways; then a wash and an early dinner with a short break for talking to the family; and finally back to his rooms and his books for as long as his stamina lasted.

There was rarely any change in this schedule. My father told me that when sleep seemed to overwhelm his will power he got up, washed his face and resumed his studies. Ghulam Nabi prescribed a minimal doze of caffeine tablets to keep sleepiness at bay. This was a help.

From this long innings of hard work, he told me, he learnt three things. First, the habit of labouring for many hours at a stretch without tiring oneself. Secondly, the will to accept a responsibility and fulfil it without complaining. Thirdly, the routine of a long afternoon walk. All three remained with him till the year preceding his death at the age of 87 minus one month.

Ghulam Nabi succeeded in passing on to his elder son the iron discipline with which he himself had ordered his whole life. He told him how he had laboured in his Batala school-days and again during his medical studies, and how much he had gained from this practice. He attributed to it whatever he had achieved in his career. Other virtues and good habits flowed from discipline. Make time your slave, not your master, he said, and use it well and to your benefit, and reap the fruit of it.

With all the advice and encouragement of his father, his own will power and hard work Abdul Aziz remained a poor examinee. He got through the finals in 1903, but got a third. A post-mortem of the result was considered unnecessary and useless. Everyone was happy that the family had produced its first graduate.

In March 1903 Abdul Aziz wedded Zainab. It was Ghulam Nabi's first male child's marriage and the clan turned up in full strength. The celebration of his graduation and his marriage made it a double bill. There was much rejoicing and most of the guests enjoyed an extended stay in Batala.

Ghulam Nabi had now to decide the future of the new graduate. Should he join a profession? Which profession? A mere bachelor's degree in arts was no passe-partout to a respectable career in life. Ghulam Nabi went to Lahore and met Professor Lucas, the Principal of the Forman Christian College, and some other people. In Batala he consulted two men, both of the Kakkezai *biradari*, who had gone to England in the previous century and successfully read for the bar. He still could not make up his mind. Abdul Aziz was too young to map out his future life.

There was at this time another family in the town which Ghulam Nabi knew well, and he thought it worth discussing his son's career with it. An ancient Rajput household had migrated to Batala in the eighteenth century and prospered under the Sikh regime. Its current head was Khan Sahib Mian Husain Bakhsh, who had retired as a district judge and was now an honorary magistrate. His son, Fazl-i-Husain, had returned from England two years ago and was now practising law in Sialkot.

Ghulam Nabi went to see Husain Bakhsh, told him about Abdul Aziz, and asked for his advice. After much discussion, Husain Bakhsh said,

"Doctor Sahib, we are living under the British and they are not going to leave India in a hurry. Your son's future should be viewed in that context. I have served the British all my life and I find that there are only two honourable professions in the India of today and of tomorrow. One is the civil service, the other the law. I sent my eldest son, Fazl, to England. He took a degree from the University of Cambridge and was called to the bar at the Gray's Inn. He

tried twice to get into the Indian Civil Service, in 1899 and in 1900. He couldn't. He is now a lawyer. The Englishman respects an Indian who has been educated in England. Call it his prejudice or predilection, but that is a fact. If you want to give Abdul Aziz a good start in life send him to England. He can go to a university or to an inn of court. He could try his luck here at the provincial civil service and start as an Extra Assistant Commissioner. You say he is a hard worker. But then you also say he is a bad examinee. I think you should send him abroad. That is my considered opinion."

Ghulam Nabi liked what Husain Bakhsh had said. There and then he decided that Abdul Aziz should go to England. When he told Zuhra and Nur of his plan their first reaction was of disapproval. The boy was too young. He had just been married. It was not good for Zainab to be parted from her husband for so long. Four years. Oh, No. That was too long. Nur was dismayed at the prospect of such a long separation from his son. The story of Zuhra and Waziruddin was being repeated. Ghulam Nabi argued, pleaded, cited his own example. It was several weeks before the two women agreed to the proposal. Nobody asked Zainab. A young bride, and so young, can have no opinion of her own. It was just not done.

Abdul Aziz was excited. Of course, he wanted to see the country from which all these powerful, arrogant, competent, well-educated administrators, and brilliant, even-tempered sympathetic teachers came. He had read dozens of books on British history and literature and philosophy and so many biographies of its great men. The foreign land seemed so familiar. It would be so nice to live there and see everything with his own eyes, to make British friends, to read in the libraries there, to buy more books. His imagination soared. He dreamed of everything pleasant and was sure he would find it in the country of the British. The undesigned and unpurposed brainwashing by missionary schools was showing.

Then such thoughts evaporated and he came down to earth. The reality was less pleasant. He will be away for four years. Zainab will not be with him there. Couldn't he take her with him? Surely he could persuade Nur to let him do that. Mother never refused him anything. But father would never agree. No Indian women went to England. Certainly not a Muslim woman. He had never heard of any. And then Zainab was expecting a child. Could he take both with him, his wife and his child? More difficulties began to break surface. What about Zainab's *burqa*? Will she wear it there too? Could she possibly take it off? And walk in the streets of London without *purda*, without a *palki* or *doli*? He took the problem to his father, hesitantly and uneasily. Ghulam Nabi's reply was brief and convincing. "You will not be able to study with a wife and children in London. The responsibility would be too great. Zainab cannot speak English. You will be condemning her to an incommunicado and bitterly lonely life for the whole day. Is that fair to her? She must stay here with the family." The matter was closed.

More fears came marching into his mind. The dear mother. Will he be happy without her for four long years? He will not be able to see her darling face, nor hear her dear voice. Was this agonizing separation worth an English education? His mind was in a whirl. Poor Abdul Aziz. Not yet 20 and called upon to deal with so many problems. Should he refuse to go, offend his father, mar his future? Yes, No. No, yes. Finally the no won. He killed his fears and vanquished his apprehensions. He was ready for the sacrifice. Paradoxically, he was also thrilled by the idea of going abroad. He could not understand himself. He surrendered to the circumstances. Let the barque sail, and find the far shore.

In early 1904 he became the father of a son. He named him Mahmud. Another hostage given to fate. But his mind was made up. He must go.

Ghulam Nabi summoned Umar from Amritsar and asked for details of the mechanics of applying for admission to the British inns of court, the travel arrangements, and the cost of the 4-year education. In April Mian Fazl-i-Husain was in Batala for a few days to see his ailing father. He had returned from London less than three years ago. His information was more up-to-date. He supplemented what Umar had said.

Abdul Aziz, intent on increasing his knowledge and driven by his love of learning, wanted to go to Oxford or Cambridge, but his poor record in Lahore and the third division he had got in his finals were a damper. He gave up the idea of a university education and sent his applications for admission to all the inns of court. In August he was told that the Lincoln's Inn was ready to have him. The last hurdle had been crossed.

In early September he bade good-bye to all he loved so much and travelled to Bombay by train. Ghulam Nabi asked Akbar Husain, 5 years senior to Abdul Aziz in age, to accompany the boy up to the port and see him off. The young traveller sailed from Bombay in the second week of September, still thinking of Nur, Zainab and the little Mahmud. Partings are deaths.

IN SEARCH OF KNOWLEDGE IN ENGLAND: 1904-1908

He arrived at the Victoria Railway Station, London, in the afternoon and was received by a representative of a small organization which had been established by the India Office to look after the interests of students coming from India. She took him to the Indian students' hostel on Cromwell Road which was a large 4-storeyed house where the newly arrived boys could spend a few days while

looking for a permanent lodging. He stayed there for about ten days and then found a place to live in.

For the next two years he lived at 69 Shepherds Bush Road in west London. In 1957, before going to England to work for my doctorate, I took from my father the addresses where he had lived in London as a student: 69 Shepherds Bush Road and 40 Dewhurst Road. Having heard so much from him about his English days I wanted to see these places personally and imagine his life. Soon after our arrival in London my wife and I set out to find these houses. A half century had passed since his time, London had changed much, and thousands of houses and buildings had been destroyed by German bombing in World War Two. So anxious and eager was I to see the houses that from the moment we left our residence in Lexham Gardens in Earls Court till we found the first house I was praying for success. God heard my prayer. Not only were both houses still there but completely unchanged and in very good condition. There was nobody at home in the first one and we promised ourselves to call again. The second we were able to enter and to examine all the rooms on both floors. I wrote to father of my good luck and he seemed to be pleased. My fancy, far more than a passing one, was gratified.

Very nearly another half a century passed. In 1996 I happened to be living in London and writing a short biography of my father in Urdu. I thought of refreshing my memory and visiting those houses again. This time I was almost sure in my mind that they were gone. A great deal of rebuilding had been going on since the 1960s in all parts of London. In several cases where the original building was *in situ* it had been converted into a hotel or a suite of offices or a commercial centre. It was not uncommon to see a line of five or ten old houses knocked down and replaced by a block of flats.

Once again my wife and I embarked upon this adventure. We were living in Ealing and, on 23 March 1996, while

travelling by tube to Hammersmith my heart was in my mouth. It was vain to hope. How can the two houses, not new when my father had lived there nearly a century ago, be still standing? We came out of Hammersmith Road and turned into Shepherds Bush Road. A few hundred yards down the road we saw a new block of flats. There you are, I told my wife, it's gone. We went nearer and found that No. 69 was still further down. There was a prayer on my lips when we moved forward. On our left, as far as we could see, there was no break in the line of houses. Another hundred yards and lo and behold! No. 69 was there as good and freshly painted and tiptop as it must have been in 1904. This was the house we had not been able to enter in 1957.

I knocked and the door was opened by a middle-aged soft-spoken English woman Mrs. Rose Waters who welcomed us when we told her why we had called. To my great luck she now owned the first floor where my father had lived. So we had the freedom of the house and closely inspected and examined every room and the kitchen and bathroom. Now I was in a position to visualize clearly the people living there a century ago.

Then we went to Dewhurst Road which turns off Shepherds Bush Road about a hundred yards after No. 69. My father moved to No. 40 Dewhurst Road in 1906 and was there for the rest of his time in England. The house was closed and the residents were out. We couldn't get in, but we had seen it in 1957, so it didn't matter.

Wanting to find the names of the owners of these houses in 1904-08 we visited the Hammersmith and Fulham Archives and Local History Centre in Tolgarth Road on 6 July and again on 19 July, and received very valuable information which I thought could not be available anywhere after one hundred years. I had six postcards which my father had received from his friends on the Continent between 1904 and 1908. They confirmed the two

addresses and contained interesting information on current affairs. I wanted them to go to a repository which would preserve them in perpetuity. I was so impressed with the wealth and uniqueness of the material the Centre had and the care with which it was handled that I donated the cards to them on 5 August. At the same time I wrote a 4-page long biographical note on my father and gave it to the Centre. On 16 August I went and took a score of photographs of the two houses as a memento.

According to *the Hammersmith and Shepherd's Bush Street Directory, 1905-1906*, No 69. Shepherds Bush Road (the apostrophe in Shepherds is now not used) was the property of one Mr. Thomas Brennan. His next door neighbours were Mrs. Shepheard Lewis in No. 67 and Mrs. Ware in No. 71. It is of historic interest to recall and record the professions of some of the owners (and in most cases also occupiers) of the houses in the road, with whom my father would have come into contact.

On the east side, on which my father lived, were:

baker (No. 7), stationer (No. 9), laundry (No. 9), physician (No. 31), dentist (No. 37), surgeon (No. 75), physician (No. 105), tailor (No. 107), dining rooms (No. 117), domestic agency (No. 119), and newsagent (No. 125).

On the opposite side were:

physician (No. 10), surgeon (No. 14), chemist (No. 20), grocer (No. 26), watchmaker (No. 44) shirt and collar dresser (No. 50), tobacconist (No. 52), plumber (No. 60), grocer (No. 66), fishmonger (No. 70), confectioner (No. 72), baker (No. 84), grocer (No. 86), butcher (No. 88), tobacconist (No. 92), baker (No. 94), fruiterer (No. 96), and grocer (No. 98). This means that the road was a respectable middle class residential area and also one in which there were shops to satisfy all needs.

Dewhurst Road to which my father shifted in 1906 was a shorter road of the same quality as Shepherds Bush Road,

but with no shops at all. The owner of No. 40 was Mr. Ralph Ralphs, on whose one side (No. 38) lived Mr. Charles Pembo, an interpreter and translator, and on the other (No. 42) Mr. Amerigo Pellegrini, R.A. It was a quiet road, even in 1996, and must have been an ideal retreat in 1906.

Now a brief description of No. 69 Shepherd's Bush Road is in order. It was a tall 3-storey terrace house situated right opposite the street called Batoum Garden (today SW6). Mrs. Waters assured me that in the house everything was original or had been replaced by a replica of the original. Seven steps led from the footpath to the porch and to the wide wooden door with a long handle in the middle and a heavy knocker. The floor of the porch was of dark red colour. Between the top of the door-frame and the ceiling was a square, thick one-piece stained glass. This fanlight was divided into two panels of equal size. On the right was an image of a bird in flight, on the left that of a yellow flower surrounded by five leaves. The door opened into a hall, from which a staircase climbed up to the first floor, and on its right was the entry door to the ground-floor portion of the house. One went up the stairs and came to the first floor, the whole of which was rented by my father. It consisted of a large front room with tall windows opening on to the road. Behind it were three small bedrooms, and at their rear was a bathroom and at the far end a kitchen with its window overlooking the modest back garden. Outside the entrance a flight of stairs went up to the second floor. In 1904-06 Mr. and Mrs. Bennan lived on the ground floor; the top floor was let out to another family. The basement, which ran under the whole house and was approached by a flight of stairs situated outside the house just short of the porch, was hired by still another family.

For a short while Abdul Aziz was the sole occupant of this floor. He enrolled at the Lincoln's Inn to study for the bar. He was now a proper student and began his studies.

Lincoln's Inn is the oldest inn of court. Its formal records, contained in the "Black Books" (so called from their black covers), go back to 1422, which means 80 years earlier than any other inn. But actually it had been in existence for some while before 1422. It is usually claimed that an Ordinance of Edward I made in 1292 was its real beginning. It took its name from Henry de Lacy, the third Earl of Lincoln (died 1311); and it is from his court of arms that the lion in the arms of the inn is derived.

The Inn occupied (and still occupies) most of the rectangle formed by High Holborn on the north, Carey Street and the Royal Courts of Justice on the south, Chancery Lane on the east and Lincoln's Inn Fields on the west. In its antiquity and the grace and elegance of its buildings it can stand comparison with the old colleges of Oxford and Cambridge.

To read for the bar and qualify as a barrister was hardly a burden on the intellect, perseverance or ability of a student, and made little call on his time. There were some lectures and advocacy courses to attend, some debates to speak at, and some training in elocution, argumentation and presentation of a case. For the rest, the student barristers had to "eat dinners", i.e., eat 18 formal dinners in the Great Hall during term times, wearing their gowns and complying with various customs and rituals. That had been the practice since the thirteenth century. (This dinner tradition and requirement was ended in 1997).

During this and the following week Abdul Aziz met his tutors, talked to some of his teachers, walked through the various buildings of the Inn, and made a preliminary exploration of the library. He purchased about two dozen text books and brought them home. The course of studies for which he had come so far from home began.

He also did some sightseeing, visiting the major landmarks and famous buildings and places. He went to the

Houses of Parliament, the Westminster Abbey, the Natural History Museum, the National Gallery and the British Museum. He walked up and down Piccadilly Circus, Knightsbridge, Hyde Park, and the better known bridges over the Thames. He made one foray to the East End to see the other and ugly face of London. Used to long walks he applied his Batala practice to London roads. If the weather was fine he often walked from his house to Leicester Square and then to High Holborn.

Having read a great deal of English history and fiction at times he had a feeling of *dé jà vu*, a puzzling sensation as if he had seen all this in one of his past lives. Nothing was totally unfamiliar. What was new was the character and contours of the English way of life. He was impressed by the Englishman's honesty, sense of responsibility, discipline, reticence, uprightness and concentration on the work in hand or the professional duties. Nobody asked unnecessary questions or tried to interfere in another's life. He saw no signs of racial discrimination. The number and size of the libraries took his breath away, and the number of their users surprised him. All this reminded him of his father. He now realized how much Ghulam Nabi shared the British values. Partly because his father was his hero and role-model and partly because of what he now saw and experienced himself, he gradually came to respect the Englishman and his strength of character, self-restraint and resoluteness. He ended up as an Anglophile.

In this, too, he was following his family tradition, Waziruddin had compared Sikh anarchy with British rule, liked the new dispensation, and become an admirer of the new rulers. Ghulam Nabi, in spite of his two damaging clashes with British bureaucracy, had opted for the English language, modern education, a new profession, and, consciously and unconsciously, borrowed much from the value system of the conquerors. Abdul Aziz trod the same path for better reasons. He was observing a new culture and

a new civilization by living amid them. He was convinced that there was much of substance in what the British believed in and tried to follow in their daily life. He also noticed that every Indian student he met, in London and at the ancient universities, looked with respect and some envy at the British, irrespective of their own religious beliefs.

This was one side of his private life and feeling. The other, more personal and emotional, was less happy. He missed home and all the people left there. This was natural, and all Indian students felt the same more or less. But his case was more serious or special, or at least he thought so.

He had already spent four years of what he considered a painful exile in Amritsar and Lahore. But those were not foreign cities, nor far from Batala which he could visit whenever he liked. He couldn't go to Batala from London for a week's stay. But wasn't this true of other Indian students too? He knew it was so, but the knowledge was no panacea of his melancholy. He analysed his own feelings and realized that it was the separation from his mother, wife and baby son which was destroying his peace of mind. He was very close to his mother. His wife was still a bride of 18 months. He had been with his son for only a few short months. And on this thought his heart cried out in pain.

Zainab was a pang within his heart. Memories of her haunted the silence of the breast. He sought strength from strengthless dreams. The ever-rolling silent hours added to this agony. He had difficult nights, and tasted sleep in slips. He had no friends in London. He was living alone in luxurious misery, but misery all the same. Had he been in a hostel he would have had people around him. They may not be his friends but they would be company. The British did not make friends easily and he had not been here long enough to mix with them. Sometimes days passed without meeting anyone with whom he could talk in his own language. Life was difficult, in spite of being an Anglophile.

In these sombre days relief came unexpectedly. One afternoon he sat brooding in his front room, with the English autumn colouring the fine trees on the road outside in its glorious tints and a very different autumn in his heart, when the knocker sounded loud. He walked to the door, opened it, and saw standing before him an Indian of medium build and a short black beard beaming at him. Before Abdul Aziz could inquire about the purpose of the caller the stranger asked in native Punjabi, "Are you Abdul Aziz of Batala, here for reading for the bar?" My father said, "Yes, I am. Come in and we will talk."

Orders of Abdul Aziz's release from melancholy had arrived. Both were Punjabis, both had gone to the same college in Lahore, both were here to study law, both were enrolled at the Lincoln's Inn, and both missed home. So many chords were struck in unison. They fell to talking, each starved of company, each eager to speak his own language, each far from home. They gossiped and laughed till late in the evening. The visitor was an excellent conversationalist and his knowledge was vast. Abdul Aziz liked him immensely in this first meeting, and on his suggestion and the assurance that a vacant bedroom was available the visitor agreed to move in with him. He was so bored with the hostel. He was grateful. He arrived next day with his bags. A lifelong friendship began.

Who was this young man who was not really so young? Shaikh Abdul Qadir. Exactly ten years senior to Abdul Aziz in age, he had graduated from the Forman Christian College, Lahore, in 1894 and was directly appointed assistant editor of a well-known English newspaper of Lahore, *Punjab Observer*, and promoted to full editorship three years later. In 1901 he had founded an Urdu journal, *Makhzan*, which had soon earned an all-India reputation for its high literary quality and discernment. In 1904 he came to England to read for the bar, and qualified in 1907. His later career was distinguished

in both public service and intellectual pursuits. He was successively a practising lawyer, a judge of the Punjab High Court, member and for a year president of the Punjab Legislative Council, Minister for Education in the Punjab, delegate to the League of Nations General Assembly, member of the Punjab Legislative Council, member of the Public Service Commission, member of the India Council, Adviser to the Secretary of State for India, temporary member of the Viceroy's Executive Council, Chief Justice of Bahawalpur State, president of the All India Muslim Education Conference at Madras in 1927, and president of the All India Urdu Conference at Cawnpore in 1940. He was knighted in June 1927. He died in Lahore on 9 February 1950.

Abdul Qadir's amiable manners and enthusiasm for life bridged the age difference between him and Abdul Aziz. He became a sort of a friendly elder brother to him. My father, who was not yet 21 and hungry for knowledge, learnt a great deal from him. The two were now almost an inseparable couple for the next three years. Together they attended lectures by Sayyid Ameer Ali, Sir Abdullah al-Mamun Suhrawardy, Sir Valentine Chirol, and other eminent Indians and Britons. They were present at a reception given in honour of the novelist Miss Marie Corelli. More than anything else, Abdul Qadir created in his younger friend a mature taste for oriental literature and the ability to accept the world as it was and yet to keep aloof from its unacceptable ways and values. Along with a few other persons in England, to be mentioned below, he played a vital part in Abdul Aziz's intellectual growth.

Abdul Qadir had a gift for attracting people of his taste. Soon a small band of serous young men gathered around him, and the ample accommodation at No. 69 Shepherds Bush Road provided a convenient centre for its weekly meetings. The large front room was turned into a talking-shop where six or seven ardent young minds argued,

discussed and dissected everything which interested them without inhibition and with the zeal and vehemence of their years. Abdul Qadir was the presiding spirit.

Next year Iqbal, the poet, joined this group. In September 1905 he arrived in England to read for the bar and if possible do some research at the University of Cambridge and on the Continent. He had known Abdul Qadir in Lahore and therefore gravitated to No. 69 Shepherds Bush Road which he said he wanted to share with the other two residents. My father surrendered his study to him and took his books and papers to the sitting room. Now the flat was fully occupied, with the three men having a bedroom apiece and sharing the sitting room and the bathroom. The weekend gatherings led to more frequent use of the kitchen, though the food cooked was at best just palatable and at worst despicable. The rent and the domestic expenses were shared by the three.

After some time Iqbal went away to Trinity College, Cambridge, as a research student, lived temporarily in Portugal Place, opposite St. John's College, and very near to Trinity, but soon rented rooms at 10 Castle Street. But he kept his room at the Shepherds Bush Road house. He had so much in common with his two fellow residents that he preferred to stay with them whenever he was in London, which was quite often and for prolonged periods. He retained the room (and later the one at 40 Dewhurst Road), even when he was periodically away in Munich for work on his doctoral thesis.

Abdul Aziz, Abdul Qadir and Iqbal belonged to three different *biradaris*, but by a coincidence all the three carried the same appellation of "Shaikh". None used it as a surname, but following the general Indian practice of those days put it before their name as a prefix. Thus, in full, they were Shaikh Abdul Aziz, Shaikh Abdul Qadir and Shaikh Muhammad Iqbal.

This chance occurrence caused much confusion for Mrs. Brennan, the landlady. When she heard all of them calling

each other "Shaikh sahib" and all visitors using the same form of address for them, she wondered at the outlandish habits and customs of these Indians, and then consoled herself by the thought that the British Empire was made up of a thousand tribes and peoples, each with its own characteristic traditions, names and cultures.

One day, in passing, she remarked that if the three boys belonged to the same tribe or clan or caste or whatever it was, why didn't they use the common surname of "Shaikh". Were they not brothers of some sort or cousins, or at the least related to one another? In reply, Abdul Qadir, always a persuasive exponent of ideas and concepts and fond of explaining things, entertained her with a short lecture on the sociology, anthropology and historical and social realities of Indian Muslims. He elaborated that "Shaikh" was an Arabic word, meaning elder, leader, wise man, etc., and several groups totally unrelated to each other had appropriated it as their patronymns. For example, he went on, he himself was a Kanungo Shaikh, Abdul Aziz was a Kakkezai Shaikh, and Iqbal was a Kashmiri Shaikh.

Before she could recover from the weight of this knowledge, Abdul Aziz intervened and said, "You see, there is another happy chance. We are all Shaikhs of different varieties, but our tribal appellations begin with the same English letter 'K'." Mrs. Brennan, at a loss for words, paused to think of an appropriate reply, and then warned them, "Your names and initial letters are your business, but, boys, you must not call this residence 'Shaikh House' and put a name-plate outside the building. What will my neighbours say?" To remove her fears Iqbal added, "No, sweet lady, we have no such intention. But what do you think of our plan of putting the name-plate of '3-K House' at the entrance? 'K' is a letter of the English alphabet, and '3' too is an English digit. Surely you should have no objection to that." Unable to bear any more of such remarks, the woman left the room hastily, but

while at the door turned back and flung at them the motherly rebuke, "You devils and rogues, I know you are making fun of me. Don't forget I feed you. I can, if baited, make your dinners absolutely unpalatable."

Such pleasantries were not uncommon, and the three lodgers enjoyed them, apologised when the persiflage overstepped decency, had genuine affection for the woman, and often brought her little gifts and presents. To foreign as well as local students the English landlady has always been a surrogate mother. The tradition is a long one and I hope still continues. Fifty years later I had the pleasure of having a sweet-tempered landlady as a student in Manchester, and my wife and I still remember her with gratitude and affection.

In 1905 Abdul Aziz's father went to Kabul as personal physician to the King of Afghanistan, an appointment which carried a generous salary and princely perquisites. This appointment would not have come at a better time for Abdul Aziz, and also his friends. His allowance took an upward and very welcome leap. He had now much more money to spend, and his fellow-lodgers were the beneficiaries of his good fortune. He himself now saw more plays, explored the countryside, travelled to Scotland and Ireland, and spent most of his holidays on the Continent, going as far as Greece, bought a lot more books, and took his custom to more expensive tailors.

The new riches also led to fortnightly visits to London's most celebrated restaurant, the Café Royal in Regent's Street. Situated at the Piccadilly Circus end of the street, this luxurious and magnificently appointed eating place enjoyed national and, thanks to some popular novelists whose fictional heroes and heroines visited it regularly, international reputation. Since my father's time it has featured in several British films and plays. Many renowned poets and writers met here regularly to enjoy each other's company. The highest in the land were to be seen here. European royalty patronized it.

A little before my father's time it was almost a second home to Oscar Wilde, who spent hours there, meeting his friends and dazzling them with his scintillating conversation and chiselled sentences which sprang out of him like water leaping from a fountain.

Whenever Abdul Aziz passed by it he told himself that he must have tea there one afternoon. He had heard that it was a very expensive place, and that discouraged him. When his first enhanced allowance arrived from Kabul he decided to fulfil his old desire. But one cannot go to a restaurant alone and enjoy the visit. Iqbal was then not in London and Abdul Aziz decided to take Abdul Qadir with him.

He told his friend about the Café Royal and Abdul Qadir was excited. They chose to have their tea there the next week. When the day came each put on his best suit, chose a sophisticated necktie to match it, and gave a good shine to the shoes. Though dressed up to their own satisfaction they entered the restaurant with some trepidation. A fine piece of wood hung outside carrying the intimidating notice "Rights of Admission Reserved". The boys had a momentary fear that they might be denied entrance because they were Indians or students. Nobody stopped them. The waiter bowed slightly and asked if they preferred any particular table or seating arrangement. They said they wanted a corner table for two. They wished to survey the whole place from a vantage point.

They sat down, ordered tea and a selection of cakes and savouries, and then let their glance rove around. What they saw they found incredible. It was not an eating place but the room of a nineteenth-century palace. The same furnishings, the same unobtrusive but genuine luxury. The carpet had a soft rich pile. In place of the wallpaper was a silken covering. The curtains were of damask, the table cover of the finest Irish linen, soft to the touch and pleasing to the eye, the crockery of fine English china, the cutlery of

classical design and shape. The ashtrays were of china too, not of porcelain or stone. Even the waiters' livery looked expensive. There were a few exquisite paintings on the wall. The lights were not too strong and were strategically placed. The boys thought the place exuded romance.

So far Abdul Aziz had drunk tea or coffee and taken his meals at ordinary restaurants visited by students and the middle class clientèle. In these places he had heard the rattle of china, the tinkle of spoons, the clinking of glasses, the scraping of plates, the chink of money, the grating of chairs being pushed back, and the slip-slap of waiter's footfalls. What a contrast with where he now sat. Not one single discordant voice or sound could be heard. The music played by an Italian orchestra was a tremulous slow cadence, reminding him of all that was good in this world. Laughter rippled on the air. The hours began to sing.

They enjoyed themselves hugely, drank several cups of tea, but before choosing which cake to eat looked at the menu to check its price. They were so overawed that they talked in whispers. The waiters called them "Sir", so did the magnificently attired doorman. They left the Café satiated and elated.

For a few days the visit was the favourite subject of all talk at home, and when Iqbal rejoined them he was told of the adventure by Abdul Qadir who was a born storyteller. Iqbal was curious and asked many questions, but expressed no desire to visit the place. Abdul Qadir tried to entice him by saying that an afternoon spent there might inspire him to write a short poem on it. The poet refused to change his mind.

Abdul Aziz was enamoured of the Café and made it a habit to have his tea there once a fortnight, mostly with Abdul Qadir. The memory of Café Royal stayed with him for almost all his life. Between 1937 and 1947 he occasionally invited a few friends to tea or lunch at Stiffle's or Lorang's, then the finest restaurants of Lahore, and the

next day he would tell me how these parties reminded him of Café Royal and his youth and Abdul Qadir.

An epochal development in Iqbal's career as a poet took place in No. 69 Shepherds Bush Road and must be recorded. Till now he was composing poetry in the Urdu language. He had a supernatural capacity for concentration. My father noticed this with some astonishment, even awe, and described it to me in these words: "Our sitting room would be crowded with friends and visitors. There would be eight or ten people, talking, laughing loudly, relating stories and jokes, and creating a hullabaloo. Iqbal would be an attentive listener or an active participant in the general conversation. And then all of a sudden he would fall silent, sit back in his chair, and close his eyes. The rest of the company did not even notice this change or become conscious of one of them not taking part in the general talk. Iqbal would stay in this trance-like state for 15 or 20 minutes, then open his eyes, look around, and announce that he had composed a few verses, and inquire if those present would like to hear them. Of course they would. This happened quite often."

One day Abdul Aziz asked Iqbal if he had ever tried his hand at writing poetry in Persian. Iqbal replied that he had not, that he knew the language well but had never thought of composing verses in it. Abdul Aziz said, "You know how rich the Persian language is and that it commands a superabundant treasure of precise vocabulary and beautiful constructions. It has an exceptional ability to convey the entire spectrum of human feelings and emotions in their numerous shades and nuances. It has another advantage too. Whatever you will write in it will be read in Iran, Afghanistan and Central Asia, and by the oriental specialists in European universities. In India most of the educated people, even Hindus, are familiar with it. I strongly feel that you should write poetry in Persian, for a change if for nothing else."

Iqbal said nothing in reply, and for two days made no reference to this suggestion. My father thought that Iqbal had not found the advice worth his attention. But on the third day, at the breakfast table, he turned towards him and said, "Abdul Aziz, that day you had instigated me to write poetry in Persian. Would you like to know the result? I have composed two ghazals; one is complete. the other is not. Do you want me to recite them?" My father and Abdul Qadir smiled and said they would listen to him eagerly. Iqbal recited the two ghazals and his friends liked them. This was the beginning of Iqbal's Persian poetry which later made him famous throughout the world.

The healthier state of Abdul Aziz's finances led to a change of address. He and his friends were quite happy at 69 Shepherd's Bush Road. They had a floor to themselves. The landlady was of an equable temperament, gentle, helpful and forgiving. But he had a heightened sense of privacy. Mrs. Brennan, sometimes with her husband in tow, would drop in for a chat. People who lived on the second floor were at times clamorous while passing by his flat on their way up. He wanted to lead a completely independent life, without a landlady, with his own choice of times for meals, and complete peace and quiet. Now it occurred to him that he could afford to rent a smaller but exclusive house and live independently. He mentioned this to Iqbal and Abdul Qadir. Both said that they couldn't pay more than what they were contributing to the rent of the present accommodation. Abdul Aziz assured them that they would not be called upon to pay a penny more. On hearing this they gave their assent instantly.

After a short search satisfactory accommodation was found at No. 40 Dewhurst Road. The new place was only 8-10 minutes' walk away and shifting was easy and quick. It was an independent terraced house of only two floors. The ground floor comprised a sitting room, a dining room

and a kitchen. On the upper floor were three bedrooms and a bathroom. The house was built on the road level; there was a patch of a garden in the front; and the walkway from the gate to the entry door was paved with coloured mosaics of pleasing designs. There was a large back garden which boasted of several fruit trees (pears, cherries and apples), flowering shrubberies and a fine length of velvety lawn.

In the absence of a landlady, a middle-aged woman was employed as a cook and general help. She came early in the morning, prepared and served breakfast, washed up, did some cleaning and left. She returned in the late afternoon to clean the bathroom, make the beds, do the necessary washing, cook and serve the dinner, wash up and clean the kitchen.

Soon after moving to the new house Abdul Aziz heard the shocking news of the death by smallpox of his son, Mahmud, in Kabul. The loss of his first-born hit him very badly, The fact that he was far away from home made the loss almost unbearable. But for Abdul Qadir's genial company and great sympathy his deep depression would have lasted much longer.

When he had left Batala Ghulam Nabi had told him that Zainab and his son would live in his care and nothing would happen to them. But Mahmud was dead. Had his father given him a false promise? The shocking news robbed him of his good sense and filial respect. He wrote a long letter and between the lines accused his father of negligence. A man of Ghulam Nabi's discipline and code of traditional values and decency could not let this infraction of good conduct pass without taking strict notice of it. He wrote a letter reprimanding his son for his bad manners, reminding him that death to all, old and young, came by God's will, and telling him that an apology was in order. There was the rasp of anger on his pen. Trained by his father, Abdul Aziz was quick to realize his mistake, repent, and write a humble letter seeking forgiveness. In

later years Abdul Aziz lost 5 more sons, all before they were of Mahmud's age. When I grew up, my father once said that it had occurred to him many times that perhaps the deaths of his next five sons was a divine chastisement for his rudeness to his father.

Nur wrote a long, consoling letter which helped her son in exile to recover his balance of mind and resume his normal life.

Now I turn to Abdul Aziz's studies and intellectual growth in England. When he arrived in London his baggage also contained an invisible but dangerous item – a severe inferiority complex. This was the result of his bad scholastic record in India. He feared that with this poor background he would hardly gain anything from his foreign stay. He felt this weakness and its possible consequences so deeply that it was gnawing at his innards. It was not an imaginary dread, or a mere bugbear, bogey or bugaboo. He had not forgotten for a moment that he was a bad examinee. What scared him was the thought that he was, and would be, a failure in life. The future terrified him. Fear was a constant neighbour. It dogged his steps, spoilt his sleep, interfered with his enjoyment of a new life in England. He saw no way out except hope, and he clung to it as an old friend. But what use was hope without a concrete and certain solution. Was he trying to fly a kite without the string? What could he do to set matters right? Abdul Qadir and Iqbal could not help him. Who could help him? He wondered and brooded. And then an unexpected door opened and he walked in.

Sir Thomas Arnold (1864-1930) had taught philosophy at MAO College, Aligarh, from 1888 to 1898 and at the Government College, Lahore, from 1898 to 1904. He had resigned from his Lahore job on 26 February 1904 and left for England, where he was asked to look after the welfare of the Indian students and take charge of the hostel built for them on Cromwell Road. After a few months he was

appointed an assistant librarian at the India Office Library, but he continued to take an interest in the Indian students. He was a distinguished scholar of Islam, and of fine arts and a conscientious cataloguer at the India Office Library.

Abdul Aziz had met him on his arrival in September 1904 and found him so friendly and sympathetic, just like his teachers in Bahawalpur, Batala and Lahore, that he went and paid his respects to him every now and then. Now he took to him the problem which was worrying him to distraction.

He explained to Arnold his fears and apprehensions and their background of his poor record in Indian colleges. The kindly English scholar had known Indians and their educational system from close quarters. It did not take him long to grasp the situation and understand Abdul Aziz's despair and ideals. He gave him some practical advice and promised help and then asked him to go and see Sayyid Ameer Ali and seek his guidance.

The Right Hon'ble Ameer Ali, the grand old man of Muslim India, whose role as the harbinger of a renaissance and a reformation has yet to be fully appreciated, had arrived in England a few months earlier to live there. He was a wise man with wide experience in law, education, religion, politics and culture, and realized the importance of the education and training of the young men of today for the sake of their tomorrow.

Abdul Aziz made an appointment and called at Ameer Ali's residence. Surprised at the warmth of his reception and the keen interest Ameer Ali showed in his problems, Abdul Aziz opened his heart to the host. He told him everything in great detail: his failure in examinations, his wide but undisciplined reading, his love of books, his father's character, his desperate desire to learn everything that was worth learning, his readiness to work hard, his lukewarm interest in law, his determination to live down his past, bury for ever his complexes, and his desperate need for guidance.

Ameer Ali liked the mien of the boy and was impressed by his enthusiasm bordering on frenzy. He assured him that failure in the Indian examination system carried no seal of finality. His first step towards a healthy outlook was to forget his Indian humiliation. He must start afresh, with new hopes. Hope had the force of law. His so ardent a desire to acquire knowledge was in itself a guarantee that he would achieve what he set out to do. Consciousness of weakness was a mark of strength. Remember what Disraeli once said: to be conscious that you are ignorant of the facts is a great step to knowledge. He suggested that Abdul Aziz should attend lectures at various universities in the country on subjects or topics which interested him. If there was any difficulty he should ask Arnold for help. Finally, Ameer Ali mentioned that he was thinking of inviting some Indian Muslim students to his house for lunch and a long meeting to hear about their problems and see what he could do to solve them.

Ameer Ali had talked so earnestly and shown so much sympathy that when Abdul Aziz left his house he felt as if half his complexes and fears had already melted away.

With Ameer Ali's winged words still ringing in his ears, he saw Arnold and told him of his talk with Ameer Ali. Arnold informed him that in British universities most of the professors and lecturers allowed students who were not enrolled with the university to attend their lectures. He said Abdul Aziz should make up his mind which subjects he wanted to study, consult the lecture lists published in advance by each university, and select the ones he wanted to attend. As adviser to the Indian students he had some authority, and he promised to help him if any difficulty arose.

Doors were opened before him as if he was expected. He sat down and drew an elaborate plan of studies. His work at the Lincoln's Inn was not demanding at all, either in terms of time or in the labour involved. The little that he did there would look after the law. What else should he

study? He decided to read philosophy, economics, history and literature. From the end of 1904 till he left England he regularly attended university lectures at several places. London offered no problem as he was living there. He was a frequent visitor to Cambridge where Iqbal was registered as a research student and had rooms on Castle Street. Oxford was almost as near as Cambridge. On occasions he also went to Edinburgh and Glasgow.

He began to attend the lectures he had selected with the regularity and earnestness of a student. He listened to the teacher with concentrated attention, took notes, and read the books suggested by the teacher. This last requirement created a serious problem. When he was handed over the first reading list he noticed that some of the titles were in the French, German and Italian languages. First he took no notice of his lack of reach to these books, but a little later he realized that every teacher was recommending books written in foreign languages, that some of them were important, and that most of his fellow students could consult these foreign publications, at times with the help of a dictionary. The study of one foreign language was a compulsory part of the school curriculum. All English students knew French or German, and depending on the subject learnt the second during the three years leading up to the finals. Continental students already knew these languages. With some rare exceptions, like Allama Latifi and Abdullah Yusuf Ali, the Indian students, even those reading history and philosophy, did not care to acquire even a nodding acquaintance with any of these languages. Most of them had come to the universities to satisfy social custom or advance their careers or because their fathers had money, not to get their minds treated.

But Abdul Aziz wanted to know enough of these languages to be able to read the books and speak to the natives of the Continent. What should he do? Read extensively in the subject, but only the literature in the English language, or take out some time for learning foreign

tongues and read less extensively in the main field? Not knowing what to do, he met Skeat, Nicholson and Ward, whom he knew slightly better than other teachers, and put his problem before them. They said that if he had a good brain, keen interest and a capacity for hard work he should choose two languages and not try to attempt more than that. For the subjects he was reading, they added, French and German should suffice. He should concentrate on them and spend as many of his holidays as he could manage in Europe in order to catch the accent and pronunciation of the natives and practice speaking with them.

Acting on this advice, he enrolled himself in the French and German evening classes in London University. For three days a week he went to the French class and for the other three to the German class. This was very hard work. Mastering the grammar took a long time. But he persisted, and from the end of 1904 till his return to India he spent all long vacations, Christmas breaks and spring holidays travelling on the Continent, inflicting his newly-acquired knowledge on the natives of France, Switzerland, Germany and Austria, insisting on speaking in these languages even when the interlocutor said that he knew enough English, living with native families, playing with their children, shopping in small establishments where the customers and the shopkeeper had to carry on a conversation, and seeing French and German plays and operas. In term time when he was in London or any university town he could always find students from the continent with whom he talked at length in these languages. At home, to his good luck, he had a professional translator-cum-interpreter living at No. 38 Dewhurst Road, Mr. Charles Pembo, who was prepared for a fee to help him with difficulties cropping up on the advanced level.

Thus working hard and taking advantage of all these facilities he made remarkable progress, so much so that in 1907-08 he was able to attend lectures at the universities of Sorbonne, Berlin, Heidelberg, Vienna and Geneva.

After his return to India he did not let this knowledge get rusty through disuse. He kept up his reading and writing and, whenever opportunities came his way, his speaking. He ordered books and journals from Europe and kept the languages alive. Later he taught both these languages at the Punjab University in 1918-26, 1934-37 and 1942-52. After 1952 he acted as an examiner at the university till the mid-1960s.

His frequent travels in Europe added another important and valuable dimension to his liberal education. He discovered a new world and a new culture on the Continent, vastly different from the British, in everyday living, art, literature, outlook and way of thinking. The Europeans presented a pleasing variety and a stimulating and vigorous approach to social and intellectual life. He lived, for short or long periods, in most European capital cities, and in every important town in Switzerland, where his favourite spot was Lucerne. He went to Italy and Greece especially to visit the classical remains. The only noticeable regions he did not go to were Scandinavia and the Iberian peninsula. Having missed Spain remained his greatest regret for two reasons: he could not see the miracles of Granada and Cordova, and he was not able to lecture on Moorish architecture from first hand knowledge when he was teaching European and Islamic art at the Department of Fine Arts at the Punjab University.

In the memoirs of my father, very sketchy and incomplete, he has given a list of the teachers whose classes he attended and it reads like an Academic Who's Who of the time. The names he mentions include:

Laurence Oppenheim. Taught law at the London School of Economics. Author of the classic *International Law* which appeared in two volumes in 1905 and 1906. He also occasionally lectured at the Lincoln's Inn.

Sir Robert Satwell Ball. Professor of astronomy and mathematics at Cambridge.

William Cunningham. Lectured in economic history at Cambridge, and was the founder of social and economic history as an academic discipline.

Walter William Skeat. Lectured at Cambridge in linguistics and the origins of words.

V. A. Smith. A retired Indian Civil Service officer. A distinguished scholar-administrator. Lived in Cheltenham. Occasionally lectured at London and Oxford universities.

J. L. Strachan-Davidson. Taught political economy and Roman history at Oxford.

Sir Raymond West. Retired ICS officer. A former judge of the Bombay High Court and vice-chancellor of Bombay University. Lectured in Indian Law at London University.

John Westlake. Taught international law at Cambridge till 1906. Then went to Edinburgh.

A. C. Benson. Taught English literature at Cambridge.

Anthony Bevan. Professor of Arabic at Cambridge. Expert in oriental linguistics.

A. C. Bradley. Professor of Poetry at Oxford. His books on Shakespearean tragedy and English poetry are inspiring.

F. H. Bradley. Taught philosophy at Oxford. Authority on Hegel. Younger brother of A. C. Bradley.

E. G. Brown. Sir Thomas Adams's Professor of Arabic at Cambridge. A master of the Persian language. World authority on Iran's culture and literature.

J. B. Bury. Professor of history at Cambridge. Trained in philosophy, then turned to history. The greatest historian of his time.

A. V. Dicey. Professor of Law at Oxford. The greatest living authority on English Constitutional law. His books are still texts.

G. L. Dickinson. Lecturer in politics at Cambridge.

E. A. Gardner. Taught archaeology at London University.

Israel Gollancz. Taught English literature, first at Cambridge and then in London.

W. P. Kerr. Professor of English language and literature at London University.

Sir John Macdonald. Professor of law at London University.

William McDougall. Taught psychology at Oxford.

John M'taggart. Taught philosophy at Cambridge. Specialized in ethics.

F. W. Maitland. Professor of English law at Cambridge.

David Margoliouth. Professor of Arabic at Oxford. Also lectured on Islam.

Alfred Marshal. Professor of economics at Cambridge. A world authority in his field.

Reginald Lane-Poole. Taught history at Oxford.

Walter Raleigh. Professor of philosophy at Oxford.

Hastings Rashdall. Professor of philosophy at Oxford.

Sir William Ridgeway. Taught archaeology at Cambridge.

W. R. Sorley. Taught philosophy at Cambridge.

James Ward. Taught philosophy and psychology at Cambridge.

His intellectual acquisition did not stop at attending the lectures of these scholars and teachers. Once Ameer Ali had settled down in London he made it a part of his routine to host a luncheon at his residence once a month, inviting ten students and five distinguished British men of letters, scholars and public men. Abdul Aziz was lucky to be invited more often than other students, and he has mentioned some of the men at the luncheon table:

Viscount James Bryce. A Liberal member of parliament. Ambassador in the United States. Author of several books on history and politics.

Sir Edmund Gosse. Poet and man of letters. A former teacher of English at Cambridge.

Sir George Grierson. A retired ICS officer. His great multi-volume survey of Indian languages is a memorable work of research and observation.

Sir A. C. Lyall. Retired Indian administrator who had held high offices in his time.

Sir C. J. Lyall. Retired ICS officer. Wrote much on Arabic literature and music.

Sir Theodore Morison. A former principal of MAO College, Aligarh. A friend of the Muslims. Very well read.

Stanley Lane-Poole. Had taught Arabic at Dublin. Author of several books on Islamic history.

The two lists indeed make up a galaxy of savants and scholars, master minds of their time and age, and prodigies of learning. Each of them was the unquestioned lord of his field of knowledge, each as individual as a fingerprint. In their presence even the unseen became manifest. Most of them were superb lecturers; their sentences hard and sharp and glistening like polished metal; their arguments glittering like crystal and cutting like ground glass. They believed in imparting knowledge without hesitation or stint, believing

The more a spring is drawn the more it flows,
No lamp less light retains by light'ning others.

They taught that the birth of doubt is the dawn of wisdom, and the curiosity of the human mind is the foundation and source of all knowledge. Ask questions, they said again and again, and the answers will come, either from us or from your inner eye. In the best of them wisdom flashed from fluent lips. They were deep-sea divers of the ocean of knowledge who came up with the pearls of truth. They lifted the torch of reason in the dark night of Abdul Aziz's ignorance.

Inspired by such preceptors he fell on the texts with the zest and missionary spirit of a theologian. He read on throughout the ever-rolling hours of the night. The fight with exhaustion went on without rest, pause or truce. And gradually the eager, young boy learnt to submit the cravings of the body to the aspirations of the soul.

There was still another stream that contributed to the waters of Abdul Aziz's intellectual current. He met some

men who had come to England from India for various reasons. Some of them served as valuable guides; some became his lifelong friends.

Among them was Hafiz Mahmud Khan Shirani, whose strange and rich life was composed of many ups and downs, the acquisition of great learning, several interesting hobbies, expertise in unexpected fields, and research of the highest quality.

Shirani belonged to Tonk in Rajistan, where he was born in October 1880. He had six brothers, of whom Mashhud Khan spent most of his life in England, and Mahmud became a teacher. All others were in business. Mahmud was educated at home, where he memorised the Quran as a child; hence his honorific of "Hafiz". His father coached him in Persian, and he completed his studies in the language at Oriental College, Lahore in 1901. He spent three years in Tonk, and in 1904 arrived in England. His father died in Tonk in July 1906 and he went home in August for a short visit, and then returned to London, bringing his younger brother Mashhud with him. But his finances were in a poor state, and to help him Thomas Arnold appointed him his research assistant and also got him a scholarship. He came to Tonk in 1913 to visit his family and receive his share of the ancestral property. The outbreak of World War One and some domestic problems did not allow him to go back to London. In 1921 he became a lecturer in Urdu and Persian at Islamia College, Lahore (thus becoming a colleague of Abdul Aziz's). He moved to the Oriental College in 1928, from where he retired in 1940. He died in Tonk in February 1946.

Shirani was a book, manuscript and coin collector, a minor Urdu and Persian poet, and a towering scholar in Urdu, Persian and Arabic. He was the father of Akhtar Shirani, one of the founding fathers of the modern romantic school of Urdu poetry.

In London Shirani's closest friends were Abdul Qadir and Abdul Aziz. It was he who turned the attention of

Abdul Aziz to oriental studies, and opened his eyes to the finer points and intoxicating pleasures of Persian poetry.

When Abdul Aziz demonstrated a keen interest in the riches of oriental letters Shirani, at Ameer Ali's suggestion and recommendation, handed over the boy to the three Bilgrami brothers.

This trio was a remarkable phenomenon in the field of knowledge and learning. No other combination of three brothers influenced my father's intellectual development.

All three were the sons of Khan Bahadur Sayyid Zainuddin Husain of the Bengal Civil Service. The family had settled in Bilgram in Oudh after its migration to India from Wasil in Iraq in the fourteenth century. Zainuddin's father was Maulavi Karamat Husain, who was the agent of the ruler of Oudh at the Viceroy's court. Zainuddin himself was a deputy collector and deputy magistrate in Bihar and Bengal in 1840-75, and after retirement a member of the Inam Commissioner in Hyderabad Deccan.

Zainuddin's eldest son was Sayyid Husain Bilgrami (Nawab Imadul Mulk) (1844-1926), who was professor of Arabic at Canning College, Lucknow, from 1866 to 1872, and then private secretary to Nawab Sir Salar Jung, Prime Minister of Hyderabad Deccan, till 1883. Then he acted, for four years, as private secretary to the Nizam himself, and was then appointed Education Secretary to the State, and retired in 1902. He drafted the address presented to the Viceroy of India, Lord Minto, by the Muslims of India at Simla in 1906. In November 1907 he was appointed a member of the Council of India, the first Muslim to hold the appointment. He retired in 1909. Abdul Aziz first met him at Ameer Ali's house and learnt much about Arabic literature from him in the one year they were together in London.

Husain's younger brother was Shamsul Ulema Sayyid Ali Bilgrami (1851-1911). He was educated in Arabic and Persian studies from the age 8 to that of 14. He had a remarkable

memory. He joined an English school in 1866, and Canning College, Lucknow in 1868, graduating from Patna College in 1874, with Sanskrit as one of his subjects. He studied law from 1874 to 1877, and entered the native civil service. Then he got a scholarship to Rurki Engineering College. After six months Nawab Sir Salar Jung took him to Hyderabad and put him on his personal staff during his visit to England. In London he joined the School of Mining, where he qualified as an Associate in two years instead of the prescribed three years, winning the Murchison Medal in Earth Sciences. Later he graduated in law from the University of Calcutta in 1891, topping the list of successful candidates (the first Muslim to do so). He retired from the Nizam's service in 1901 and settled in England. In 1902 he was appointed Reader in Marhatti at the University of Cambridge. He was a book collector of note and left an impressive private library. He drafted a constitution for the prospective Muslim University at Aligarh. He died of a heart attack in Hardoi, where he had settled after returning from England. While he was teaching at Cambridge he was simultaneously cataloguing the Arabic and Persian manuscripts of the India Office Library. He also guided Iqbal and Abdul Qadir in the literary field. My father perfected his Persian and improved his Arabic under his tutorship.

A half-brother of Husain and Ali was Major Hasan Bilgrami (died 1915), who was in Indian Medical Service. After retirement in 1903 he settled in London. He was the leading light in the London Muslim League from its inception in May 1908 till his death.

All the three brothers were excellent linguists, each knowing about eight languages.

Abdullah Yusuf Ali was another source of inspiration whom Abdul Aziz met by chance at one of Ameer Ali's luncheons. Yusuf Ali was in the Indian Civil service and had come to England on a year's furlough. This meeting soon led to a friendship which lasted till Yusuf Ali's death

in 1953. Yusuf Ali was senior to Abdul Aziz by several years, and there were differences of status and learning, but nothing stood in the way of an extraordinary intimate relationship. They had common interests, looked at things from the same angle, and liked the same authors. My father told me that the greatest debt he owed to Yusuf Ali was an insight into English literature.

I have already mentioned Ameer Ali's monthly luncheons. They began in November 1904 and from the beginning Abdul Aziz was invited to them more often than other students. He found them a feast of unparalleled intellectual stimulation. Among the guests there were always about half a dozen Englishmen from different walks of life, each distinguished in his own profession and métier. The host planned these get-togethers carefully. The idea was to give an opportunity to the young Indian Muslims to see, meet and talk to the finest breed of British minds who were not only well informed and well read but had held high offices with distinction.

I remember the deep feelings of pleasure and gratitude with which my father used to recall these meetings for me, and also with a gnawing regret that these days would never return. Imagine a boy in his early twenties, in the company of retired ICS officers, former governors and judges, generals, members of parliament, ambassadors, scholars, teachers, editors and ministers. With wonder and surprise he heard them talking, relating sophisticated jokes, discussing weighty matters of state, and holding forth on the pleasures of poetry and enticements of philosophy and might-have-beens of history.

Their anecdotes made history sit up and breathe. All of them were men of eminence and great insight who had taken and known the pulse of their nation, and some of them of India too. What they gave to Abdul Aziz and the other students was the message of hope on the condition that they

put their shoulder to the wheel of life. They asked them to learn to trust their vision against events and to stand erect before the cruel, untamed reality. Don't be afraid of the dazzling, immutable, irresistible power of unarmed truth, they advised. One of them, my father could not remember who, had spoken a sentence which summed up the exemplary watchword of both imperialism and ultimate search for wisdom and learning: be realistic; demand the impossible.

In my father's words: " They had all seen the world closely and played an important role in making it what it was. What I learnt at Ameer Ali's table moulded my mind and my taste for the rest of my life. I learnt how to choose a good book and read it with all my senses on the qui vive, how to judge men and events, how to appraise Western values and understand Western outlook, to watch Western manners and behaviour, notice the way certain words and phrases were used to enhance the quality of the conversation, and to observe how the aristocracy of intellect intermingled with the patrician class with perfect ease. When a former governor of an Indian province related his experiences, a member of parliament explained the policy of his party, a university professor unfolded the arcane mysteries of his subject with unbelievable clarity and felicity, a writer or poet talked of the secret power of words and imagination and the magic created when the two were yoked together, a historian applied the lessons of the past to the passing show of today, the astronomer enumerated the population of stars and galaxies and drew the moral that our earth was not as important as our little minds liked to imagine, and Ameer Ali himself spoke on law and justice and Islam – you can imagine how our hearts and minds were affected. We, the students, were encouraged by the elders, no matter how distinguished, to ask questions, to differ, and to explain and defend our point of view. My real education and intellectual instruction came about around that table, where the food was excellent but the talk was even

better. We became discriminating gourmets, but, what was of far greater and more lasting value, also trained listeners. Our mind was enlightened. New ways of thinking and new dimensions of thought dawned upon us. Our eyesight was turned into a vision. Our intellect was sharpened on the whetstone of inquiry. We learnt that argumentation was superior to assertion. We were instructed in good behaviour, and taught the art of asking relevant and intelligent questions and to give polite and intelligent answers. In short, it was a good school of living a meaningful life. After that I did not have such company. I was lucky to be there. I can't forget those days. The good does not last long. For a long time now I have been living on memories. What else is there to live on? But still the dream remains, the melody lingers, and I can still hear the strains of music. Remember, son, good luck never lasts. You should be prepared to live without it. Look at me."

I was then too young to read the pain behind these words. I realized its full impact much later when he was dead and I came back from Europe to live in an intellectual wasteland where a man of intellectual discernment was as scarce as a river in a desert.

Some of the Indian students and others whom my father came to know well in his English years ought to be mentioned here to indicate the kind of company he kept.

Sir Sultan Ahmad was his classmate at the Lincoln's Inn and they were called to the bar on the same day. Later he reached the summit of public life by being appointed a member of the Viceroy's Executive Council. In 1944 or 1945 when he came to Lahore to address the convocation of the Punjab University, and stayed at the Government House, he traced my father's address and came to see him. They talked for over an hour of their London days. I met him then for the first time.

As Abdul Aziz spent a good deal of his time in Cambridge most of the contemporaries whom he knew well and missed in later years were studying there.

One was Muhammad Wasim, a brother of Muhammad Habib and Muhammad Mujib and a cousin and brother-in-law of Chaudhri Khaliquzzaman. He was at Magdalene College from 1904 to 1907 and was called to the bar in 1908. He was one year younger than Abdul Aziz. Later he rose to be the Advocate General of Pakistan. His son, Halim, was a Chief Justice of Pakistan.

Sir Shah Muhammad Sulaiman was two years younger than Abdul Aziz. He read mathematics and then law at Christ's College, 1907-10, failed to enter the Indian Civil Service, and was called to the bar. He had a distinguished career in Indian judiciary as a chief justice of the Allahabad High Court, 1932-37, and a judge of the Federal Court, 1937-41. Though they had a short time together in Cambridge, he kept in touch with my father till his death in 1941.

Khwaja Abdul Majid, one year younger than Abdul Aziz, came from a feudal family of Aligarh. He was in Cambridge from 1904 to 1907 and was also called to the bar. He and my father joined the London Muslim League together in 1908. In 1921 he succeeded Maulana Muhammad Ali as principal of Jamia Millia, Delhi, and became its chancellor at Dr. M. A. Ansari's death.

Like Sir Shah Muhammad Sulaiman, Saifuddin Kitchlew and Abdul Aziz were together for just one year, but there grew between them a friendship which only ended in 1947 when Kitchlew went away to Delhi. Exactly four years younger than Abdul Aziz, he was a Kashmiri by extraction but the family was since long settled in Amritsar and lived in Katra Sufaid, near Dhobian di Gali (Street of the Washermen), in the Lahori Gate area. He studied law and history at Peterhouse from 1907 to 1911, and later in 1913 took a doctorate in history at the University of Munster in Germany. He was also called to the bar at the Lincoln's Inn. He practised law in Amritsar and Lahore (but lived in Amritsar) and entered politics as a member of the Indian

National Congress, where he rose to be its General Secretary, in 1924. He received the Lenin Peace Prize in 1952.

His nationalism and Congress credentials were of no use when the Hindus burnt down all his immovable property in Amritsar in 1947 and he had to flee to Delhi. There he lived in extremely modest circumstances in a tiny little allotted house with his wife and nine children.

Occasionally, during his morning walk, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, an old friend, dropped in to talk to him and inquire about his welfare. He was keen to help Kitchlew and was fully aware of his sacrifices and sufferings. But he also knew how self-respecting Kitchlew was. Not daring to broach the subject himself, he sent a message to him through a common friend, Maulana Ahmad Saeed, saying that he wanted to help Kitchlew and asking if he would accept whatever the Government of India offered him. Kitchlew was lying in bed and leaning back against the bolster when the Maulana conveyed Nehru's message. On hearing it he sat up and looking the Maulana straight in the eyes said, "Bhai, Jawaharlal ko keh déna ké ham qaum ki khidmat ka mu'awaza nahin lya karté." (Brother, go and tell Jawaharlal that we are not used to accepting wages for what we have done for the nation). Kitchlew never mentioned this incident and nobody was aware of it until Ahmad Saeed published it in one of his articles in his journal after Kitchlew's death. Kitchlew died a poor man on 9 October 1963, his wife following him in 1970.

Kitchlew was in Pakistan in 1953 and came to see my father. I was then lecturing at the Government College, Lahore. For some reason that I have never understood he congratulated me rather too effusively and ended up by saying, ' I envy you, son, and then turning to my father, 'Aziz, I envy you, too, for having a son who teaches at this college. I always have had a desire tucked up somewhere in an inner compartment of my heart to be a lecturer at Government College, Lahore. But fate wrote a different script for me'.

My father said, 'You chose law and politics. You rose high. You did your duty. But you are suffering much in your old age. I am sorry for you. Why don't you come to Lahore? Most of your clan is here. You have old friends here. Come here, Saif. We will be together again. Your visits to Batala were short and infrequent. I have missed you much all these years.'

Kitchlew replied, 'We have been friends for nearly 50 years. I can speak to you frankly. Do you want me to come here, get two bungalows allotted to me and something else to live in comfort. Enjoy my old age. I know I am poor. I know I have nine children and a wife to look after. I live in a 3-room "chabara" in Delhi. My servants had better accommodation in Amritsar. I am sure you mean well. You are a good friend. But, Aziz, what will I do with my conscience? Throw it away in old age? Forgive me for saying something else. Your Muslim League leader crosses the Wagha border in a tattered dress, and a month later is installed in a large fully-furnished bungalow and lives on the income of a shop or a factory allotted to him.'

'But you are not a Muslim Leaguer,' said my father.

'Forget about the creators of Pakistan. In the last one week I have met a dozen enemies of Pakistan, old Ahrar leaders and prominent men of the Jamaat-i-Islami and the Jamiat-ul-Ulema, who have struck gold in the country, which they said would be created over their dead body. They are healthier than they were before 1947. I know them all. Do you want me to imitate them?'

'The shadow of times upon our world,' said Abdul Aziz.

Kitchlew continued, 'There is no armour against fate, you are living in a house even smaller than mine in Delhi. And you say it is a rented one. You possess nothing. You, the son of Dr. Ghulam Nabi. Your haveli in Batala was the biggest in the town. It could hold all my houses in Amritsar within itself and still have space to spare. And today you live here. These

two rooms and one courtyard. Life is rich but fleeting, like the smell of a summer rose. I won't say more.'

'The writ of destiny has not run in our favour,' said my father. 'Could we imagine this end to our lives when we walked the lanes of Cambridge, or sipped our tea at the Copper Kettle [a restaurant in Cambridge on the King's Parade opposite the King's College; it is still there]? Our cards dropped like that. The deal was not ours. We played them the best way we could. Nobody can fight his destiny. Neither you – nor I.'

"Pitch not the tent of your joy at the door of this ancient inn', said Khvaju', Kitchlew intoned the line in the original Persian.

"So free we seem; so fettered fast we are', is how Browning puts it', capped my father. 'Our flowers have turned into flames.'

The sombre talk of the two old, sad, disillusioned men went on for some time, and then my sister came in with tea things and they began to reminisce about Cambridge. Kitchlew went away in the evening. On my mind he left an impression, which I still carry with me, of a transparently honest man, with no trace of bitterness in his visage or voice, feeling sorry for my father, not for himself, sincere, a friend to a friend, much sinned against but calm in his brow, composed, pure of heart – a Cantabrigian to his fingertips. That was the last time he and my father met.

Next to London, and in some ways better than the metropolis, Cambridge was the town most familiar to my father. He spent a lot of time there attending lectures and reading in the library. As Iqbal was living there for about a year and a half he had no accommodation problem. He lived with him whenever he was there at No. 10 Castle Street, next to a church at the corner of Chesterton Road and Castle Street. For those who know only the Cambridge of later days let me briefly describe the town my father knew.

The Castle Street house lay just on the periphery of the inner town. The farthest college was only a quarter of an hour's walk away. For his haircut he went to Count Priziborsky's shop, which divided the Round Church Street from Ram Yard. It was opened in 1879 by the Count who had been the barber to the Imperial Austrian Court. I saw it just in time, because it disappeared in 1962 along with the building during a road widening operation. But the corner of the Bridge Street and Round Church Street was preserved and the old corner façade was restored in 1977.

Of the bookshops, Heffer had opened in Petty Cury in 1896 and Bowes & Bowes (later Sharrratt & Hughes) in 1899. The best-known shop was that of Gustav David, who had started as a book stall man on the Market Hill in 1896.

Double-decker motor buses were first seen in 1905, but within a year both the companies plying them had gone out of business because of technical problems and fears about road safety. In 1907 another company began operating the buses. The Cambridge Motor Omnibus Co. charged one penny for every journey within the town; and Abdul Aziz and some of his friends sometimes rode it a dozen times a summer day just for the fun of it. The upper deck was unroofed and thus open to the elements.

Of the three major departmental stores, Joshua Taylor had rebuilt its Sidney Street premises in 1889; it closed down in 1995. Robert Sayle and Eden & Lilly (closed down in 1999) already existed. Hallack & Bond was on the corner of Market Street and Petty Cury. The retailing giant store of Matthew & Son (established in 1830) was in Trinity Street, and had its own café´ and restaurant. It was closed down in 1964. The town's public library was housed in an elegant building in Wheeler Street, near the Town Hall and opposite the Corn Exchange. The building still stands, but the library has moved too much larger but purely utilitarian premises in Lion Yard. The university

library was situated at the back of the Senate House, facing Clare College.

Given the quality of the teachers whose lectures he attended at the various universities in Britain and Europe, the calibre of the men he met at Ameer Ali's table, the great ability and knowledge of his senior friends like Abdullah Yusuf Ali, Abdul Qadir, Iqbal, Shirani, and the Bilgrami brothers, the demonic zeal with which he pursued the Golden Fleece of learning – given all this, Abdul Aziz must have garnered an extraordinarily rich harvest of knowledge in his four years in England. Few students of his age enjoy the privilege of the company of men like Ameer Ali and Sir Thomas Arnold, and the rare opportunity of hearing lectures at the ancient seats of learning; and fewer still read such a wide range of subjects. Even if he was a man of average intelligence, he must have profited from the teaching, guidance and example of so many renowned masters of their fields. He used to say that in this stay in England while he realized the severe limits of what he knew and the weakness of his intellectual equipment, he was also inspired to advance into the realm of knowledge and self-realization as far as his native ability and his mentors' sapient guidance could take him.

He failed to enter the Indian Civil Service in 1906, probably because he had cast his net very wide and neglected specialized preparation essential for the competitive recruitment test, or perhaps because he was still a poor examinee. But at the end of his stay he could claim to have read widely in more subjects and mastered more foreign languages than any Indian student with a good degree from the best British university. That was a considerable achievement and he was proud of it. Above all else, the English stay destroyed completely and for all time his inferiority complex in matters academic. As he told me in 1957 when I was leaving for England for my higher studies,

after 1908 he walked erect and straight in any company he was in. His work in England had wrought this miracle.

Abdul Qadir departed for India in October 1907 after having been called to the bar. That left Abdul Aziz and Iqbal in the house, but Iqbal was away in Munich for several months and my father was all alone in No. 40 Dewhurst Road. But he did not share the house with any of his other friends or have paying guests. He lived in greater comfort and complete privacy and some loneliness. He treated the loneliness as solitude and used it to aid his studies. In July 1908 he and Iqbal were called to the bar. Iqbal left immediately for Lahore. Abdul Aziz bade goodbye to his friends, teachers and neighbours and set out on a 2-month valedictory tour of the Continent. Speaking French and German, looking up some of his old friends and hosts, staring at the historical remains which commanded his reverence, changing trains and coaches, he finally arrived in Genoa where he caught the boat heading for Bombay. His first and last visit to the West was over.

During the voyage back home, aboard the ship which was bringing him nearer to India every minute, he often thought about the four years he had spent in England. How fast they had gone, one month flying after another, failing to capture it, and itself disappearing into eternity. How noiseless falls the foot of time.

What had he achieved, living amid an alien race, so far from everyone he loved? He thought: much. He had seen his realms of knowledge expand, and his imagination taking fire from the milieu. He recalled what some of his teachers had said. Golden words. To be conscious of the limits of thought was to be able to think beyond those limits. But in all humility. Never have the arrogance of passing judgement on what is ultimate truth. From these lectures he had always come back to his residence with a face luminous with certainty of mind and tranquillity of spirit.

Somebody had told Ghulam Nabi that he was making a mistake in sending his son to England at such a young age. Now Abdul Aziz thought it had not been a mistake at all. No doubt his tender years had worried him for some time, and added to his loneliness. But he had started learning when his mind was still malleable: soft clay ready to receive new impresses and harden them into itself, make them a part of itself. That is how his mind and brain had absorbed ideas, opinions, attitudes, points of view. His life lay before him and ample time to judge and test them. Catch them young!

In one thing his stay had been a singular and certain triumph. He had overpowered his sense of inferiority. In future he would never let the idea of failure lodge in his mind. From now on he would live a life, not an apology for it. He lay at anchor from all storms of mental strain. The world was young, alive and beckoning.

BACK HOME AND AN AFGHAN OFFER: 1908

Abdul Aziz arrived back in Batala at the end of September 1908, and stayed there for a few days to met his relatives and old friends. Then he set off to see another country.

Ghulam Nabi's family was still in Kabul and would not leave for the Punjab for another month. Abdul Aziz was expected and everyone was waiting for the day of the reunion with a beating heart. When he arrived in Kabul everyone gave him the most exuberant welcome. Ghulam Nabi embraced him in a tight squeeze, kissed him on the forehead, and looked at him with pride. Zuhra took him into her arms, hugged him and kissed him all over the face. Nur's joy was beyond description. Her darling had come home and she did not know how to express her happiness and the tumult in her heart. She made him sit in her lap as if he was

still a baby, kissed him repeatedly, announcing to the people around again and again, 'My *kaka* has come back. I love him. I have missed him so. Look at him. He has grown up. He is a man now. Oh! I love him. He is my life.'

The woman who had waited for him more anxiously and passionately than anyone else sat in a chair, staring at the floor, only occasionally, clandestinely, shyly, raising her glance to his face. Their eyes met and a message passed between them. Zainab did not exchange a word with him beyond *assalama laikum*. Any further talk would have been considered too forward. Abdul Aziz felt so frustrated, but he was helpless before a social code which could not be breached. He smiled in his heart at the oddities and eccentricities of Indian life and traditions. He could not talk to his own wife right away whom he had met after four years! Arriving from England it looked so bizarre, so cruel, so heartless. He kept his thoughts and feelings to himself. Only time will change the times.

Abdul Aziz had planned to stay in Kabul for a week but Ghulam Nabi ordered a much longer sojourn. For a month he lived with the whole family in Kabul. He met Prince Amanullah, and they had several long and serious conversations about Europe and Abdul Aziz's views on the Western world. Amanullah was full of questions, in childlike innocence anxious to transfer the whole of Abdul Aziz's knowledge to himself. He told Abdul Aziz of the relationship he had established with the doctor's family and informed him that he was an adopted son of Nur and an adopted brother of Zainab. He addressed my father as Bhai Sahib or, less often, Baradar-i-Bazurgam.

Abdul Aziz was granted an audience by the King and then asked to stay on for lunch. Habibullah had visited England in 1907 and observed much, but he still asked many questions, mainly on education and technological progress. The Amir was gracious. He even wanted Abdul

Aziz to live in Afghanistan permanently. But, as he said with a sigh, 'What will you do here. We have neither a legal system nor any courts of justice. Well, not yet!' He was an irrepressible reformer, ever intent on pulling his medieval society into the new century.

At home the men and women talked to or about Abdul Aziz interminably. They wanted to know everything he had seen and experienced in England, but when told they could not understand much of it. Zainab was gradually opening up and daring to ask questions in the presence of others. One day she asked him something and he began to explain. Unconsciously he used a few words of English, and then hastened to say the same thing in Punjabi. She interrupted him and said in English, 'No translation, I know what you mean.' So great was his astonishment that he almost fell out of his chair. 'You, you know English?' Before she could answer and tell him of the true parameters of her proficiency in English, Nur related the whole story of her learning the language at Ghulam Nabi's orders, and the reason for it. He was as surprised at Zainab's attempt to learn English as he was impressed by his father's wisdom and foresight.

When they were alone, he said to Zainab,

'I wish I had taken you to England with me. I felt so lonely. And your English would have been perfect.'

'I don't think that would have done me as much good as the staying back has done.'

'Will you explain that? I don't understand.'

'When I married you I knew so little about you, though we are cousins. You were still a stranger when you went away. In these four years I have been fully initiated by Waddi Amman [Zuhra] and Amman [Nur] in the family's history, traditions, code of manners, everything that would help me in being a wife fit for you.'

'So I went to school in England, and you received a different kind of schooling here. We are very lucky to have

such wise elders, Zainab. Who else but my father would have thought of it?'

'So I hope you will find in me a wife suitable for an England-returned barrister. I am not an educated woman, but perhaps I know you better than you yourself. Waddi Amman and Amman have told me so much about you and our common elders. Sometimes I think I know a lot more of the family history than you do. I will try to be a good companion to you as long as I live.'

'Oh, knowing all this I am sure you will be. I hope you are not a handful.'

'Never. My role-models are your mother and grandmother.'

'Then you don't know the family chronicle as well as you claim. My grandmother was at times more than a handful for Dada Waziruddin.'

'Exactly. That is why I have said she is my ideal and role-model.'

'My dear wife, you will not be a handful, you are one already.'

The two laughed and another ring went home in the chain of their companionship.

Everyday Zuhra, Nur and Zainab would ask Abdul Aziz question after question on his life in England. Feminine curiosity and familial interest sustained this interrogation. They were not educated women and understood only a little of what he told them. Yet the inquiries did not stop. What did he eat there? Not pigs and swine surely? All of them piously recited *la-haul*. Who cooked his meals? What did he have for breakfast? Did he drink a lot of milk? Was London as cold as Kabul? Did he work very hard? How much did he miss them? Whom more than others? The questions never stopped.

When the women paused to regain their breath, Abdul Aziz took over the role of the interrogator. He was more interested in what had gone on in Kabul and Batala in his

absence than they in what he had been doing in England. They told him everything about their coming out to Kabul, his father's new job, the palace life, Amanullah's entry into the family, Nur-as-Siraj's modern fashions, the king's generosity, the uncle next door, the people in Batala, bags of dry fruit, Kabul's severe winters, and so on.

At the end of October the weather grew cold and the annual migration started. The women left for Batala. Abdul Aziz wanted to go with them but he was asked to stay back.

Ghulam Nabi told him that the King wanted to talk to him on some important matters but it would have to wait until he was in Jalalabad. Frustrated by his inability to accompany Zainab to Batala but intrigued by what the Amir had to say to him, he obeyed his father.

A few days later he and Ghulam Nabi travelled to Jalalabad. As the doctor's family went away to Batala every winter he had not been allotted a house in Jalalabad. He and Ghulam Muhammad lived in a wing of the royal palace. Abdul Aziz lived with them for the next one month. The royal summons came suddenly one day. The king would see him today after the lunch. The doctor need not attend. Abdul Aziz was puzzled at what Habibullah would have to say but was more excited at the prospect of being with a King.

It was not an audience with all its galling rituals and formalities, but an informal meeting. When Abdul Aziz entered the room the King was sitting in a sofa chair with his feet up on a footstool. Abdul Aziz was relieved to find a third person in the chamber. Amanullah sat in an easy chair, next to his father. The sight of the 16-year boy who called his mother Amman and his wife Apa calmed Abdul Aziz's nerves. The smile on the king's face and a broader one on the prince's put him at his ease. He was asked to take a seat on the King's left, in a sofa which had been pushed a little forward so that he was facing the royal presence and the King or the prince did not have to turn their neck to speak to him. The servitors

brought in a large selection of cakes and savouries and platefuls of dry fruit, served hot tea, and withdrew.

The session began with a few introductory remarks by the Amir. 'I have summoned you for a special purpose. Thank you for coming. I know the doctor's ladies have gone to Batala and you were detained for this meeting. Thank you for staying back and coming to Jalalabad. I won't keep you longer than necessary. My son is here because what we are going to discuss concerns the future of this country which he might rule one day.'

Then the purpose of the meeting was disclosed. Habibullah wanted to make Afghanistan a modern state. And he was in a hurry. Perhaps he realized that the spell of stability he had ushered in might not last. He was impatient and his zeal was unbounded. He had made peace with the British Government of India and the treaty had brought several benefits to the country. He had opted for a pro-British policy, mended fences with Russia, increased trade with Central-Asia, and taken other steps to give his country time to modernize itself. He had introduced many reforms in law, society, medical system, armed forces, technical skills and economy. Above all he was gradually Westernizing the educational system. But he was not satisfied with the pace and the content.

He talked for an hour on the theme, and then began to ask questions. What was the secret of British strength? Did it lie in its military power, or in her economy, or in the resources provided by the empire, or the character of the people, or something in the way its history had unfolded itself? More inquiries followed. Why was Britain a monarchy and yet a successful democracy? How could an elected parliament be compatible with a privileged royalty? By what means was the government made responsible to the people and responsive to public opinion?

Obviously the King was in need of a series of lectures on British economic and political systems in particular and on the

might of the West in general. Abdul Aziz was happy to detect a lot of intelligence and some sound knowledge in the royal inquiries. Now was the time to use his studies of history and economics at Cambridge, Oxford and London. He answered some of the questions in detail, concentrating on politics, law and administration. The first session was over.

Three days later he was again summoned to a meeting. This time Abdul Aziz tried to explain the connection between the past and the future of a country. The theme of the discussion was the foundations of reforms. A society evolved in a certain way and in the process adopted or created its own values which became the basis of its life. To change these values was a task of decades if not centuries. You can push your people in a certain direction against their will for some time, but unless they were convinced of the wisdom and benefits of change they would relapse, and probably would become even more recalcitrant and stubborn. In other words, education was the key to success, but an education which had as its twin objects academic instruction and character building. This was not, he emphasized, a Western or alien or novel concept. In all Muslim societies of all ages *ta'lim* (instructions) and *tarbiyat* (upbringing) had gone together. The British had made this principle their guide some centuries ago when they established public schools and the older universities. The missionary schools and colleges in India which he had attended were providing education and upbringing. No Muslim or Islamic school was doing this. Aligarh was a partial success, and even that it owed to its British teachers. The only 'modern Islamic' movement had been started in Bengal by Sayyid Ameer Ali. Its appeal was blunted by the poverty of the people, the English language which was its vehicle, the great distance separating Bengal from the Muslim north India, and the rejection by Sir Sayyid Ahmad Khan of Ameer Ali's political initiative.

In the third and concluding session Abdul Aziz stressed two points. His Majesty should travel slowly and in stages on the road to progress, constructing bridges and *pucca* roads behind him so that the gains are consolidated and become a permanent part of society. Secondly, he should not ask the medieval tribesmen to change their ancient ways in a hurry. Afghanistan suffered from two major drawbacks: it was a very conservative country and it had not come into contact with the West. There were backward countries in Africa, as reactionary as Afghanistan, but they were now feeling the Western touch. This might be welcoming imperialism, but the new world emerging in Africa and Asia would develop on the lines marked out by the West. We may not like it, but it seemed inevitable.

Afghanistan had imported so many Indians from India, many of them from the Punjab. The British had conquered the Punjab in 1849, and within 50 years the province was sending out doctors, engineers and teachers to Afghanistan and East Africa. Why? Because of Western education. There was nothing in Western education which rejects any of the basic and fundamental Islamic principles or values.

Before the last meeting was over Abdul Aziz returned to the King's earlier question about the prospects for a democratic parliamentary government under a monarchy. The two pillars supporting the system were educated lawmakers and a well informed public opinion. The King should concentrate on these. Educate the members of the *jirga*, your parliament in embryo, and spread the education widely so that more and more people are fit to read newspapers. The newspapers will create a public opinion. This opinion will stop the King from acting autocratically and force the parliament to be responsible to the people.

Habibullah was a good listener, had an intelligent mind, and was a strong believer in the necessity and value of reforms. He heard Abdul Aziz with attention and thanked

him for spending so much time with him. To Ghulam Nabi, later, he said he had learnt a great deal from his son.

It was Habibullah's first encounter with a young Muslim educated in England. Knowing Ghulam Nabi, he had been confident before meeting Abdul Aziz that his son would not tell lies or procrastinate or say things merely to please him. His expectations had been proved true. He was so impressed with Abdul Aziz that he seriously thought of employing him as an adviser. The Afghans being so sensitive and most of the uneducated ones suspicious of foreigners, Habibullah planned to appoint the young man in the palace secretariat under a harmless and innocent designation like advisor on educational reforms or senior tutor to the Princes, but in fact to benefit from his Western experience, knowledge and understanding. As he put it, he would be a good bridge between Afghanistan or his own person and the various Islamic reformist ideas and movements abroad. In modern vocabulary, he wanted Abdul Aziz as a one-man think tank.

Habibullah did not make any offer to Abdul Aziz during their long meetings, did not even drop an oblique hint. But afterwards he talked to Ghulam Nabi while his son was still in Jalalabad. The doctor knew the country very well by now. He was aware of the court intrigues, the tribal rivalries, the yet unbridled power of the warlords, the weak administrative structure, the unstable nature of Habibullah's rule, the vague but possibly dangerous ambitions of the Musahiban brothers, and the uncertain future of any radical reforms. No secrets remained secret in Afghanistan. In case of a serious crisis or an explosion he himself would probably be safe as a mere physician, but the political nature of Abdul Aziz's work would put him in the firing line.

He talked to his son, describing the current situation in the country and expressing his own fears, but leaving the final decision to him. Abdul Aziz had liked the King very

much, and found him to be a sincere, though rather too zealous, reformer. He needed and deserved help and guidance. But conditions in Afghanistan were very discouraging. Ghulam Nabi was right. His own life might be in danger, and in a really bad situation, his family's. He had no right to expose his women and children to such hazards. And could he himself live happily in this primitive country under antiquated living conditions? Was he doomed to live in exile all his life, be it in modern Europe or in medieval Kabul-Jalalabad? Will Zainab like it? Would they send their children to India to be educated, away from them? And later the sons would get jobs in India and the daughters married in the Punjab, and so would still be separated from them.

That decided the matter. He could not accept a job in Afghanistan, however high in protocol and privileges and rich in emoluments. Ghulam Nabi conveyed the decision to Amir Habibullah. He liked the Amir and the Amir had been so good to him. So he did not tell Habibullah the real reasons for Abdul Aziz's decision. He just said that two insuperable hurdles stood in the way. Abdul Aziz must live in India to manage the family properties which had already been neglected during his stay in England; and Zainab wished to be near her brothers to whom she was deeply attached and who had already been separated from her since her marriage in 1903.

The Amir was disappointed but took the 'no' in good grace. Some years later he told Ghulam Nabi that Abdul Aziz had taken the right decision. A foreign counsellor to the ruler on such a delicate issue as social and political reforms would have caused more trouble for the King.

LEGAL PRACTICE: 1909-1920

When the Afghan offer to Abdul Aziz had been declined firmly Ghulam Nabi asked his son about his professional plans. He said he would practise law. Where? demanded his

father. Abdul Aziz explained that Lahore was too big a station with over a dozen lawyers making a living by pleading at the Chief Court. Most of them were non-Muslims and good in their profession. The competition would be tough. One of his English friends in London, whose father had been a judge in Burma, had suggested that he should join the Rangoon bar. There were not too many lawyers. The Indians enjoyed a good reputation. The Burmese were helpful. Therefore, he said, he had decided to go to Rangoon. Ghulam Nabi said he knew little of his profession and could not advise him. If he had made up his mind about Rangoon he should go there; and he wished him well.

In early December Abdul Aziz arrived in Batala. Nur had sent Zainab to Dodhi to visit her parents for a month; she had just come back. The couple made preparations for the long journey, selecting things to take with them, and choosing the four servants to accompany them. Zuhra and Nur were not very happy at Abdul Aziz's decision to go to Rangoon, but they were mollified by the thought that Abdul Aziz was expected to do better there than in Lahore. Zainab had brought with her from Dodhi her 14-year old middle brother, Majid, who had been much attached to her in Dodhi. There was another consideration. Zainab had yet no children. In Kabul she had lived with the family. Now wherever they went she and her husband would be, at least for some time, the only members of the household. Majid would be good company and make the home lively. Abdul Aziz too liked the idea.

Zainab's and Majid's deep mutual love introduced an uplifting and enlivening element in my family and made happy the hearts of two generations. Majid was born in April or May 1894, when Zainab was ten years old. In many families with sons and daughters it happens that a sister and a brother find themselves attached to each other much more deeply than to other siblings. This mysterious

chemistry worked to bring Zainab and Majid very close to each other. Zainab carried him around and coddled him as a baby. They grew up and played together. Their love waxed and surged. When Zainab was married in 1903, the 9-year old Majid felt bereft and went back to Dodhi in tears and deep depression. Now they had met again after five years, and Majid refused to face a separation again. Seeing this Ghulam Qadir raised no objection when Zainab said she was taking Majid with her wherever she was going. They lived together till 1916 when Majid married, and got a job in Jhang. Even then he and his wife, who was Zainab's cousin, spent a lot of time with Zainab. The wife and her two daughters often came to live with Zainab for six months in the year. This wife died in March 1924, and in December 1925 Majid married her younger sister, from whom he had no children. The routine did not change. This wife and the two daughters continued to live with Zainab half the year every year till 1947. Then in Lahore the family lived with us most of the time.

I inherited my mother's unbounded love for Majid. Partly through genes and partly by living together, Majid and his second wife became my surrogate parents, and the two daughters, much senior to me in years, my beloved sisters. The younger one, Jahanara, was far more dear to me than my three real sisters, and even today the memory of her leaving me for ever in 1946 is a stab in the heart.

Before the year 1909 dawned Abdul Aziz, Zainab and Majid were settled in Rangoon. Majid was sent to an English school. Zainab looked after the home. Abdul Aziz readied himself for legal practice as soon as the court reopened after the Christmas break.

The only blank period in my father's life is the years of his legal career. We know nothing about it, and I have little to tell the reader except how he came to bring an end to it, though even that has the look of a myth. Even my mother

did not mention anything worth recording about him as a lawyer. Therefore I can only chronicle the important incidents which occurred in his life in these years and say something about the dimensions of the growing companionship between man and wife. That is all.

In 1909 the couple had their second son who was given the same name as the first one who had died in Kabul in 1906 – Mahmud II. I cannot find any reason for this repetition of the name. It might have been due to a superstitious belief that the practice was an assurance that the second child of the same name would survive. This is mere speculation. I never asked my parents about it. But whatever the reason for it, the trick didn't work. Mahmud II died in 1913.

In 1911 Abdul Aziz left Rangoon and came to Hissar in Punjab. Again we don't know why he moved. Maybe his practice was not successful. Maybe the climate did not suit him or his wife. Soon after their arrival in Hissar Zainab bore a daughter, Akhtar, on 17 July. Next year (1912) another son was born and named Abdul Rahman, after the first Amir of Afghanistan whom Ghulam Nabi had briefly served, probably because this had been the family's first contact with royalty. Whatever the background of the child's name it brought no luck, and he died the next year (1913) in Missouri.

In 1914 Zainab's father Ghulam Qadir, retired from Dodhi and settled in his own haveli in Batala. His eldest son, Hamid, after graduating from Aligarh, was employed in a government office in Lahore. Majid was living with Zainab. The old couple had only their youngest son, Rashid, who was now 15 years old, with them. As Batala was more accessible than Dodhi, Zainab visited her parents regularly.

In 1915 Nur died in Batala, which was a stunning blow to both Abdul Aziz and Zainab. In the January of next year (1916) they moved to Montgomery (now Sahiwal), and after a month Zainab gave birth to another daughter, Razia. In May Majid was married to Habib, a first cousin on his mother's side.

In July my parents made another move and came to Lahore. In September they came to Batala for a month to prepare for the wedding of Abdul Aziz's younger brother, Hamid. A few weeks after the marriage, on 7 October, Zainab lost his father. She had not lived with him since her marriage in 1903 and missed him much. After his death in Batala, Piranditti, Zainab's mother, had no one to take care of her. Hamid was in Lahore and lived in a shared accommodation with a few colleagues. Majid was posted in Jhang. Rashid, at this time in his 17th year, was too young to look after his aged mother. So Zainab decided to take her mother and Rashid with her to Lahore. Two months later Zuhra died, to Zainab's utter desolation and Abdul Aziz's great grief.

In January 1917 Abdul Aziz lost his sister Umrao. In the spring of the same year Ghulam Nabi resigned from his appointment in Kabul and returned to live in Batala. As he was prostrate after losing his wife, brother and mother in less than two years Zainab made it a point to visit him with the children for a few weeks twice a year. Abdul Aziz came to see his father as often as he could and for two months of the vacation of the Chief Court. In the same year (1917) Zainab had another son, who was named Abdul Rahman II; he died a few months after his birth in Dalhousie. On 12 February 1918, still another son, once again named Abdur Rahman III, was born in Lahore; he died on 14 November after seven years.

As if challenging the angel of death Zainab produced another son on 26 November 1919, and with a perverse persistence Abdul Aziz named him Abdul Rahman IV. The angel won; he died on 22 August 1921 in Dalhousie.

Let me go back a little. Abdul Aziz visited Lahore from Hissar in the Christmas break of 1915 and met his old friends Abdul Qadir and Iqbal. Both of them were closely associated with the Anjuman-i-Hamayat-i-Islam, an organization which ran the Islamia College of the city. In

passing Abdul Qadir mentioned that the College needed a professor of philosophy and they were looking for a properly qualified Englishman who would be prepared to come out to India. Abdul Aziz suddenly thought of one of his friends who might agree to take up the offer.

While in England he had met an Irish-French young man who had studied English literature and philosophy at the University of Dublin and was then working for a doctorate in philosophy at the University of Leipzig in Germany. He was very bright with sharp eyes of piercing intelligence behind a thick monocle. The liking was instantaneous and mutual and they had become friends and travelled together in Germany for two months. Later they continued to see each other in England and in early 1908 he and his wife (a German) had stayed with him at 40 Dewhurst Road for a month. Since then they had been in touch through letters.

Now when Abdul Qadir mentioned the philosophy professorship Abdul Aziz immediately thought of this friend, Dr. Vésey Hague. He gave his address to Abdul Qadir so that the Anjuman could send an offer to him and, if he was willing to come out, to negotiate the terms. On returning to Hissar he wrote a long letter to Hague, describing the city of Lahore, enumerating its attractions, saying that he himself was thinking of shifting his practice to Lahore, and asking him to accept the Islamia College offer if his wife had no objection to living in India.

The College offered the post to Hague and after an exchange of letters the terms of his appointment were settled to the satisfaction of both parties. Hague had kept Abdul Aziz posted of the developments. In the meantime Abdul Aziz had moved from Hissar to Montgomery, but did not like the station. Actually it was the news of Hague's impending arrival in Lahore which made him start thinking of moving to Lahore. This he did in July 1916.

Dr. Hague and his wife arrived in Lahore towards the end of September 1916 and at once he began to teach at the College. He was given the salary of Rs. 400-40-700, the usual grade granted to Europeans with good degrees. By this time Abdul Aziz had also come to Lahore and rented a bungalow on McLeod Road not far from the railway station. Abdul Aziz persuaded the Hagues to hire a house in the same vicinity so that they could see each other as often as possible.

The two old friends lived near each other and met almost every day. They had not realized in England that they shared so many things in life. Their intellectual and literary tastes marched with each other. They liked the same authors and the same books. Both liked riding and long walks. Mrs. Hague began to visit Abdul Aziz's family. Zainab's English, learnt in Kabul, was resuscitated. First shyly and haltingly and then with some confidence she began to converse with Mrs. Hague. Within two months the Hagues became family friends and Dr. Hague became the first and last European before whom my mother appeared without *purda*. Her spoken English never became fluent, but it improved and her vocabulary became richer. When the four of them sat together, even when she was not taking part in the conversation, she found that for the most part she could follow what was being said.

The Hagues were remarkable linguists. Hague knew English and French equally well, being of mixed descent. His German was perfect, and he had a good command of Italian and Spanish. Mrs. Hague was German but her English and French were as good as those of a native. She also knew three other European languages. Between the two of them they could cope well with ten languages. It was from them that my father learnt Greek and Latin. Hague was a competent philosopher and a brilliant teacher. The principal of the college, Henry Martin, called him the most valuable asset of the college. The Punjab University authorities were so

impressed with his ability that they allowed the college to open the post-graduate class in philosophy.

But, alas, this keen intellect and good friend left this mortal world too soon. He had typhoid in April 1918, recovered, caught small pox in November and died in the same month. My father was prostate with grief, made arrangements for his funeral and lowered his coffin in the grave with his own hands in the Jail Road Christian cemetery. My mother had seen so much of him in the last two years and liked him so much that she felt as if she had lost a brother.

In 2001 I made several attempts to find Dr. Hague's tomb and explored the cemetery for this purpose. I contacted the Church authorities who told me that their pre-1920 records were no longer extant and even they could not identify or locate his grave.

Mrs. Hague and her two young sons stayed on for another month and then returned to Ireland. For a few years the widow kept up a regular correspondence with my father: every letter containing a short paragraph at the end addressed to her friend Zainab. She also sent her son's photographs and news of their schooling and education. After about six years her letters stopped abruptly and my father did not have any other address where he could inquire about her. He presumed that she had died. Her letters were lost in Batala, but I still possess photographs of Dr. Hague, his wife and the two boys. My father must have brought them from Batala to keep them with him. And though Hague died nine years before I was born my father talked to me so often of him that I have always felt as if I knew him and his wife personally.

When Abdul Aziz shifted to Lahore from Montgomery his family consisted of Zainab, Piranditti, Rashid, Wazir and himself. Majid's wife came and stayed with them for several months every year. In 1920 the residence was shifted to Park Lane on Temple Road.

This change of houses coincided with an important milestone in his life. He decided to abandon his legal practice. The real reason for this step was obvious and I will discuss it below. But first a tale must be told.

A story has been circulating in our family since long which attributes my father's giving up legal practice to the following incident. One day in February 1920 he was arguing a case before an English judge of the Punjab Chief Court and was explaining a difficult legal point when the judge interrupted and spoke a few short sentences. In this interjection the judge uttered a word which my father thought was wrongly used. Postponing temporarily his set address on the point he was elaborating, he made a short speech on the etymology, formation, nature, meaning, connotation and roots of the word in question. He finished his discourse by suggesting that the learned judge should withdraw that word and substitute it with another because the word he had used was liable to lend itself to a different interpretation and an emphasis which were out of place, and which gave an unfavourable complexion to the argument he had offered.

It should be kept in mind that this was the time when British rule was so firmly established in India that people talked of its infinite presence with full confidence. This was also the time when Lahore was recovering from living under martial law. People were afraid of the British. The authority and pomp of the white rulers were far beyond those of the Mughal Empire in its full vigour.

Thanks to the successive instalments of democratic reforms implemented in India by the foreign masters themselves, the British were by now accustomed to a lot of criticism of their rule. They were even learning to tolerate some harsh words and sharp, pointed speeches in assemblies and political gatherings. They were familiar with attacks on their rule. But the judge faced a novel situation. A lawyer, though a barrister of a British inn of court, was accusing an

English judge of using a word of his own language wrongly. This he could not stand. No Indian had the right to question an Englishman's command of his own tongue.

Abdul Aziz persisted in his plea. The judge saw it as an insult in full dress and insisted that he was right. My father said, "My Lord, I stand by my point of objection. I have gained my knowledge of your language and the science of linguistics from the greatest living authorities of the subject teaching at your country's ancient seats of learning. If you don't believe me the best way to settle the question is to send for the *Greater Oxford Dictionary* and look up the word. That should end the matter."

The judge believed strongly in the superiority of his knowledge. He ordered a court functionary to bring the required volume of the lexicon from the bar library. The book was brought to the courtroom. The judge and my father looked up the word in dispute and carefully read its various meanings, shades, nuances, and usages. The dictionary supported Abdul Aziz's reading.

The judge possessed a small mind and lacked the moral courage to admit that he was wrong, use another word, and let the case proceed. He began to prevaricate and quibble, saying "Well, you know there is some scope for ambiguity here. The word can be used like this; it can also be used like that. I don't think I was in the wrong." Abdul Aziz was arguing a brief in a court of law. He could not prolong the controversy. Nor could he tell the judge to his face in an open court that he was lying and trying to conceal his ignorance. Nor could he ask him to apologise.

My father was a great admirer of the British nation. He used to tell his friends that the Indians were lucky in their present rulers. Had India been conquered by some other European nation like Portugal or Belgium or Germany or Italy, they would have suffered much more. In spite of holding such a strong opinion in favour of the British, at

this juncture he could not persuade himself to let the judge have his say. He put a period to the dispute and to his career as a lawyer by addressing the judge in these words, "My Lord, far be it from me to commit a contempt of court. Nor am I insulting you. Please disabuse your mind on this point. But my conscience and what I learnt at your venerable universities from men of great eminence do not allow me to appear before you as a pleader today and for the days to come. Please permit me to withdraw. I am saying goodbye to the legal profession."

He left the courtroom, apologised to his client, returned his fee and asked one of his colleagues to follow the case. He came home in Park Lane, took off his black lawyer's coat, and told Zainab, "Today I have given a lesson in English language to an Englishman or rather tried to do so. But he doesn't want to learn anything. Anyway I have said farewell to the legal practice." By now my mother knew her husband as well as a good student knows his textbook. She did not protest or argue.

I have said above that this is a tale much told in my family. My uncles and aunties and their grown up children knew it, and I heard it from them. I cannot take my oath on it. Once or twice I asked my father if that is how he gave up his legal career. He gave me a knowing smile but said nothing. Neither yes nor No. I was his son and could not insist on an answer. My mother was dead. Perhaps she would have given me the correct version.

Whether this story is true or a mere myth or a much-embroidered version of some insignificant incident does not really matter. The real reasons for Abdul Aziz's forsaking law as a profession are clear and nobody knew them better than my mother. What she told me was this.

There was no money problem. She did not remember how much the practice brought in. Even if it was not much it did not matter in the least. On Abdul Aziz's departure for

Rangoon his father had granted him a permanent monthly allowance of five hundred rupees from the income of the estate. That was a large amount in those days. So the size of his income from the practice made no difference to the domestic budget and could not have played any part in his giving up the profession.

His disillusionment lay elsewhere. He was depressed by the state of district courts: the run-down buildings, the shabby bars and retiring rooms, the inadequate libraries, the noisome toilets. Coming from London the contrast was painful. The general quality of the lawyers also did not impress him. Barring an odd exception, all were local law graduates with little general knowledge and no interest beyond their legal work. There was hardly any with whom he could talk about history or literature or philosophy. He found them of little minds and narrow vision. In their professional work and conduct in the court they proved that they were small men. Some spoke with a firm command of the interminable. Some regarded swearing as a social grace. Some argued until their voices grew shrill and their faces red. Others talked on and on in the bar room as if in love with their own vacuities. Every time they essayed even a feeble joke it induced rigor mortis in everyone within earshot. In the court room points were refined to the point of ambivalence. It was with unconcealed disdain that he talked to my mother of these pigeonholed, narrow minds and undeveloped brains indulging incessantly in vacuous rhetoric, verbal callisthenics and empty verbiage.

One can understand, perhaps even forgive, this arrogance and derision in a newly-arrived barrister who had by a happy chance moved in eminent circles in England; though he should have known what was waiting for him in the *mofussil* stations. But even this depression was not the real reason for the step he took.

Although he had been called to the bar in England, everything that he had studied there, the friends he had

made, the great men he had met, the milieu of the universities he had attended, the interests he had cultivated, the values he had imbibed – everything had made him unfit for the life of an ordinary lawyer in the towns of India. Everything said and done and all allowances made, he was not cut out to be a lawyer. He had no interest in what he was doing. His father had said that he should follow the profession for which he had been trained in England. He couldn't say No. For eleven years he did what he was ordered to do. But one cannot spend his whole working life knowing that he is wasting it. As he told my mother, sometimes making a living is not living. He wanted to live.

"But what do you want to do?" my mother asked in exasperation.

In reply he launched into a long speech on what he had done and dreamed of in England. For the first time he told Zainab that but for his love for her and Nur and the fear of his father's displeasure he would not have returned to India. He told her, for the umpteenth time, of Cambridge and Oxford, of Sayyid Ameer Ali's luncheons, of the affection of his teachers, of museums, libraries, art galleries, lectures and the Café Royal and his friends. He would have gone on and on, but Zainab stopped him.

"I have heard all this before. My question is: what do you want to do here? Forget about going back to England?"

"Reading and writing books", he answered.

His greatest ambition, his dream, he said, was to live like the great scholars he had met in Oxford, Cambridge, Berlin and Paris, to be like them, to become a scholar and an author. He had never forgotten what Shirani and the Bilgrami brothers had once said: man is born to master knowledge, knowledge lies there to be mastered by man. The two are inseparable, have been inseparable since the world began. The nexus is unbreakable because God in His wisdom has ordained it.

He appealed to Zainab with a catch in his voice,

"I have been very patient. I have lived among third-rate lawyers and pleaded before second-rate judges for eleven years, years that did not seem to end. How much longer could I go on? Intellectual hypocrisy demeans one in one's own estimation. It is treachery to one's self, one's inner being. Soul is a unity. I can't smash this unity. My real vocation calls me. I can't plug my ears. You know I have been playing hide-and-seek with learning these eleven years. I have spent two hours in preparing a case, and six in reading the books I like. I can't go on living two different lives. Their duality will drive me mad. One should do what one wants to do, what gives him pleasure as well as increases his knowledge. I don't want to be a labourer. I want to be a man of letters. I am embarking on a new voyage, a voyage of discoveries and new horizons. If you give me your help and sympathy and understanding you can make my journey an adventure leading to much pleasure. You married me many years ago. Now you must give me a new pledge – to share my enthusiasm, to encourage me, to smile at my labours, to be happy with my work, to be proud of what I hope to do. Will you give me that assurance?"

"Yes. In full and without reservation."

My father felt as if he had been delivered from a curse. Freedom had come, and he vowed to use it well.

My mother kept her word. For the next 28 years and 4 months – the rest of her sojourn in this world – she never complained that his obsession was playing havoc with domestic economy, that property after property was being sold off to finance his research, that money was being borrowed without any collateral for the printing of his books, that they were coming down in the world, that life was becoming hard.

In the last four years of her life she suffered much. This daughter of a rich family, the friend of royalty, accustomed to command a dozen servants, once the owner of vast properties (my father had transferred the ownership of all his inherited

estate to her when my grandfather died), brought up in the lap of luxury, used to the grandeurs and splendours of this world, beloved of Nur and Zuhra, respected for her virtues by Ghulam Nabi, the adopted sister of King Amanullah, for years led a *son et lumière* life – this woman lived in a tiny rented house in a lower middle class quarter of Lahore, washed her own clothes, cooked her meals, peeled and chopped vegetables, prepared the dough, and scrubbed dishes, so that her husband could carry on his life work. Her pains and penalties were great. But her loyalty to the pledge she had given to my father in 1920 was greater.

Thanks to Ghulam Nabi's wisdom and foresight and the training Zainab had received in the lore and tradition of the family in Kabul, Zainab and Abdul Aziz became ideal companions for life. It was not a mere man-wife relationship. Threads of many different shades wove the garment of their married life. They lived by the same moral code. They upheld the family honour. They shared the same values. But Zainab's contribution was greater and nobler. She was not an educated woman. Yet she acquiesced in his pursuit of academic interests and ambitions, encouraged him, helped him as much as she could, felt proud of the name he was making for himself, protected him from wasteful calls on his time, in a real way made his work her own. Abdul Aziz was a very lucky man. It was a tragedy that she died early, leaving him alone to travel the rest of his path for 22 painful years.

TEACHING: 1920-1924

For one who had given up his own profession for the sake of his academic occupation there was only one place to go: an educational institution. He did that but with some reluctance.

At this time people who controlled the Anjuman-i-Hamayat-i-Islam were well known to Abdul Aziz – Mian

Fazl-i-Husain, Iqbal, Shaikh Abdul Qadir and Khalifa Shujauddin. They were aware of his passion for reading and research. When they came to know that he had abandoned his legal practice and was doing nothing they began their efforts to persuade him to join the teaching staff of Islamia College which was run and managed by the Anjuman. They had to work hard to win him over because the Committee of the Anjuman which controlled the College did not enjoy a good reputation. It interfered too much with the Principal's work and the duties and activities of the teachers. Abdul Aziz had never been an employee of any institution or government. He was not sure if he would fit into the college system. Then the principal of the college was an Englishman, and he had just now clashed with an English judge and given up his legal practice because of it.

However, he found it difficult to reject out of hand the suggestion and advice of his old friends. Their argument was that by becoming a college teacher he would be fulfilling his desire to busy himself in acquiring knowledge and moving among the literati of Lahore. And if money mattered to him at all he would also be replenishing the income which he had lost by closing down his legal practice. The greatest pressure came from Abdul Qadir who had been so close to him in London and Mian Fazl-i-Husain whom he had first met in Batala in 1904 and kept in touch with since his return from England.

Abdul Aziz agreed to teach at the college on the condition that he was given the rank of a professor and the starting salary reserved for British appointees or Indians with a good British degree. At first sight this appeared unreasonable. In terms of formal qualifications he had a third class B.A. degree (after failing once in the examination) from the Punjab University. His diploma from an Inn of Court had nothing to do with academic teaching. But Abdul Qadir and Iqbal knew how he had spent his time in England, collecting knowledge

from various universities as avidly as a greedy child collects his favourite toys, attending lectures in a variety of disciplines at Cambridge, Oxford, London, Berlin, Sorbonne and Heidelberg universities, studying harder than an undergraduate and mastering two European languages. He had also travelled much, and that in those days was considered a valuable liberal education. These were formidable qualifications and might cancel out his poor academic record in India and the absence of a British degree. But the College Committee, the recruiting body, had hardly any academic or scholar on its strength. Jealousy was an endemic vice among Indian Muslims. The Muslim newspapers of Lahore, particularly Maulana Zafar Ali Khan's *Zamindar*, considered it their duty to supervise, criticise and pontificate on the work, performance and background of the college teachers and the Anjuman's managers. It could be said, as it was by many whose opinions mattered, that attending lectures at the best British universities and studying widely and deeply were good things in themselves but they could not be an acceptable substitute of a degree.

But stronger forces were working in Abdul Aziz's favour. On his request Syed Ameer Ali, Sir Thomas Arnold and two professors of Cambridge wrote letters of recommendation to the College Committee. And then, happily, the authority of the British entered the lists on Abdul Aziz's side. The Punjab government sanctioned a grant-in-aid of Rs. 30,000 to the College, and the salary of the professor-to-be-appointed was to be met from this grant. Which meant that the provincial education department had a say in the appointment. When the Director of Public Instruction of the Punjab heard of the doubts of the College Committee regarding Abdul Aziz's fitness for the job, he said he would like to talk to the candidate after the Committee had interviewed him. This "talk", though informal and without any official imprimateur, determined the final decision. The Committee's hesitation and

reservations dissipated before the English official's enthusiastic backing for Abdul Aziz. His appointment was approved as a professor of English in the grade of Rs. 400-40-700. The principal, an Englishman, with a degree from Oxford and several years' teaching experience, had started in the same scale, and so did his successor, with a degree from Edinburgh, a little later.

Now for the details of my father's appointment. P.E. Richards, a graduate of Oxford, had come to India in 1911 and started teaching English at Dyal Singh College, Lahore. He and his wife were greatly interested in staging plays in the college and at other places in Lahore and were well known to the British and Indian elite of the city. In early 1915 he moved to Islamia College as professor of English. When the principal of the college went on long leave to England in February 1920 Richards was appointed to perform his duties (it was characteristic of the College Committee that he was not officially named as officiating principal). In late May or early June Richards died.

On his death the College Committee resolved to write to Henry Martin, who was still in England, to search for Richards's successor in England, but before the letter could be dispatched, the Committee appointed Abdul Aziz as an officiating professor of English in Richards's place on the recommendation of the Director of Public Instruction. My father took charge of his duties at some date in June or July 1920.

At this time the principal was Henry Martin who had graduated from Oxford in 1890. He had arrived in India in 1906, taught English literature and economics at MAO College, Aligarh, for a few months and then history at the Agra College for one year, before joining the Islamia College as principal in 1910, an appointment which he held until 1920, the longest tenure enjoyed by any head of the college in its history of over a century. During his principalship he also acted as an officiating professor of history at Presidency

College, Calcutta (July-September 1915). He had started in the grade of Rs. 400-40-700. He resigned on 10 December 1920 and went to Peshawar as principal of Islamia College at a salary of Rs. 1200. After retirement from there he settled down in Aligarh permanently.

Martin was succeeded by James Leitch Wilson who took charge on 1 May 1921, and retired in 1925 after my father had left the college. Wilson had been educated at the University of Edinburgh. In the college he taught English and economics.

The College Committee soon vindicated Abdul Aziz's fears about its integrity and conduct. As soon as Wilson took over as principal the Committee terminated the services of Abdul Aziz. He told the Committee that he had been appointed in place of Professor Richards and the principal's arrival could not affect his tenure. On 22 May the Committee reversed its decision and decided that his association with the college was not only in the interest of the college but also essential for the continued receipt of the grant-in-aid of the Punjab government. He was therefore confirmed in his job in the grade of Rs. 400-40-700. He was also a Fellow of the University (member of the Senate) for one term.

He had been appointed as Professor of English, but soon he was also made Professor of Economics, and a little later asked to teach philosophy also. This undesirable practice has always been followed by second-class colleges in India and later in Pakistan. When it is known that a teacher has a qualification in a subject other than that which he was appointed to teach he is asked to take classes in the other subjects also, without any extra emoluments. My father's frustrations were increasing.

Among Abdul Aziz's colleagues he made one new friend and met an old one. The new one was Sirajuddin Azar, who had an M.A. degree from the Government College, Lahore, and joined the staff of Islamia College in

1918. He had wide knowledge of Urdu and Persian literature, was a book collector and a remarkable judge of oriental manuscripts.

The old friend was Mahmud Shirani who had lived in England for many years and taught much to my father about oriental studies. He came to Lahore from Tonk at the end of 1921 to get his son admitted to a college. He met Abdul Qadir who talked to Iqbal and Mian Muhammad Shafi. As a result he was appointed to teach Persian at Rs. 150 a month. Before that he had taught Urdu at the Oriental College; and on that appointment Sayyid Sulaiman Nadavi had written in his journal *Ma'araf* that this was the first example of the appointment of a person to teach Urdu without any degree or formal qualification and purely on the basis of his scholarly work. This also applied to his job at Islamia College. He looked after the Urdu section of the College magazine *The Crescent*. He left the college in 1928 for the Oriental College. He, too, was not happy with the attitude of the Anjuman and the College Committee, and once complained of it in a letter to Maulavi Abdul Haq.

Mian Fazl-i-Husain was the secretary of the College Committee from April 1920 to April 1923; it appears that he resigned in 1921, because after that Khalifa Shujauddin's name is mentioned by the official historian of the college. Iqbal was the secretary of the Anjuman; the president was Nawab Zulfiqar Ali Khan of Malerkotla; and the vice-president Chaudhri Shihabuddin. The Committee of the Anjuman in 1921 consisted of Shaikh Abdul Qadir, Maulvi Fazluddin (advocate), Shaikh Azimullah, Khwaja Ferozuddin, Sardar Habibullah, and Dr. Khwaja Abdur Rahman.

In 1922 the College Committee, which was elected by the General Council of the Anjuman, consisted of Chaudhri Abdul Ghani, Dr. Sayyid Muhammad Husain Shah (a surgeon), Shaikh Abdul Hamid (from Central Training College), Malik Barkat Ali (advocate), Maulvi Muhammad

Shafi, and Munshi Muhammad Hafeez (superintendent, Accountant General's office). In 1923 the following were added to the list: Ghulam Muhayyuddin Qasuri (advocate) and Shaikh Taj Muhammad. Abdul Qadir was elected chairman of the Committee in place of Justice Abdur Rauf, and Chaudhri Shihabuddin the secretary.

Abdul Aziz knew some members of the College Committee, particularly Abdul Qadir, Ghulam Muhayyuddin Qasuri, Malik Barkat Ali, Mian Muhammad Shafi and Shihabuddin. But he found it humiliating to complain to them about every little misdemeanour of other members and some members of the Anjuman's Executive Committee. The problem was that there were too many centres of power, and their members were intent upon using or misusing their authority to suit their fancy. Abdul Aziz had nothing against the principal, who in fact was his colleague in the departments of English and Economics.

There were only 15 teachers to teach 555 students. The largest number (4) taught English, then came science with 3 teachers, Arabic with 2, and history, philosophy, economics and Persian with 1 each. My father was the only member of the staff to teach two subjects (English and Economics) officially and another (philosophy) unofficially. He found the teaching load too heavy, and this feeling grew stronger as his interest in research deepened.

Contemporary Muslim politics impinged deleteriously on the activities of the college. Abdul Aziz's early years coincided with the high tide of the Khilafat and non-co-operation movements in the Punjab. The so-called non-co-operators and nationalists wanted the college to be closed down because it was being run by the "toadies", sycophants and "hangers-on" of the British, or to be made into a centre of the extreme right wing of the Khilafatists. At external instigation some students began to misbehave. *The Civil and Military Gazette*, a British daily newspaper of Lahore,

reported on 23 November 1923 that when Abdul Aziz was teaching the fourth year class some students hurled abuses at him, insulted him, and threatened to assault him physically.

This unruly element in the college received much encouragement from the intemperate writings published in an Urdu daily newspaper of the city, *Zamindar*. Its proprietor was the fiery Maulana Zafar Ali Khan who wallowed in abusing everything in sight: the British, the college principal, the Anjuman, the College Committee, the Muslim League, and other Muslim newspapers of the city. He had a poisonous pen and a perfect command of the invective in the Urdu language. Politically unstable and with little knowledge of the wider public canvas of the subcontinent, he was insufferably self-righteous and ferocious in his attacks. He was also dishonest as it turned out later when he sold his "Blue Shirts" to Sir Sikandar Hayat Khan for a few thousand rupees. He disrupted the college life and created serious problems for the Anjuman and the teaching staff.

Abdul Aziz taught for four years at the college and then his patience and endurance ran out. He resigned in 1924. I don't know the date or month of his resignation, and the history of the college is unhelpful. His only regret on leaving the college was that Shirani was no longer his colleague. But that was a momentary feeling. Both of them would be in Lahore and meet regularly.

When one day, over twenty years later, I said to my father that had he stayed on in the college for another year and waited until Abdullah Yusuf Ali took up the principalship he would have saved himself the frustration he suffered, his reply was, "Yes. But then look how the college behaved with him and he had to leave two years later. And the story was repeated in the 1930s when Yusuf Ali again headed the college and was again forced to resign. No, I think my decision was right. No self-respecting person could teach there. The Muslims will never learn how to run an

institution efficiently and honestly. In the last 20 years the college has not improved its working or its image. In any case I found that instead of encouraging my academic and literary ambitions and helping me in their realization the college was impeding my work and that was a predicament I could not live with for long."

His personal and family life in these years was tranquil and contented. Some years earlier Ghulam Nabi had purchased two bungalows near Data Durbar and the district courts, one for each son. In those days their location was central and convenient. If one walks from the district court's main entrance towards the Veterinary College, and then turns right just short of the college gate he will find himself on the Tapp Road. It was a very quiet and short road, with the college wall running almost all the way on the left and with residential bungalows on the right. The road made a T-junction with another road called Qutb Road. The last house on the right on Tapp Road was given to my father's younger brother, Hamid. Its frontage was on the Tapp Road while its lawn's boundary wall ran along Qutb Road. On Qutb Road at the end of this wall was my father's bungalow. Each of the houses was built within the last 10 years on a 10-kanal plot, but each with a different design and elevation. My father's had 8 bedrooms with bathrooms *en suite*, and the usual drawing room, dining room, pantry and kitchen. A wide veranda ran all around the house. My uncle's lawn was on one side of the house. My father's was at the back. There was a row of 10 servants quarters, two garages and a small stable. There was a door in the wall dividing the plots so that the inmates could visit each other without leaving the houses and going round from one road to another.

My father's house had a large orchard beyond the lawn. On the edge which divided the garden from the lawn was a well. In the area around the house it was known as *thandi khui* (cold water well), and its water was very cold even at the

height of summer and was also reputed to have medicinal qualities. Servants of many people living in bungalows stretching to the Data Durbar and Mohan Lal Road (now Urdu Bazaar) on the one side and Government College and Katcheri Road on the other came to draw water from this well.

In 1921 or 1922 Abdul Aziz moved from his rented bungalow in Park Lane on Temple Road to his own house on Qutb Road. The family now consisted of Abdul Aziz himself, Zainab, their two daughters, Zainab's mother Piranditti, Zainab's youngest brother Rashid, and Abdul Aziz's sister's son, Ahmad Hasan. For most of the year there were "permanent guests". Abdul Aziz's sisters came visiting with their children and stayed for months. Zainab's favourite brother, Majid, usually sent his wife and daughters from Jhang to Lahore and they stayed on for several months every year. Then there were relatives who dropped in occasionally for a few days.

Abdul Aziz was educating Ahmad Hasan at Government College. After his graduation he got him a job in Delhi in the office of the Railway Board, and later married his eldest daughter Akhtar to him. This daughter and her younger sister Razia were now attending the Maclagan High School on the Lower Mall near the university grounds.

Rashid had passed out of the school but refused to join a college or get a job. He was a wastrel, but a pleasant, cultured wastrel. Like his father he had a good command of Persian and Urdu literature and was fond of reading poetry. He also had the bad habits of smoking too much and playing card games.

Then one day he disappeared without any reason or telling anyone. Zainab and Piranditti wept out their wails. The mother cried all day and at the end almost lost her sight. Several years after Piranditti's death Rashid wrote to Hakim Jan from Bombay that he wanted to return home but needed money for the journey. The money was sent. He did not

come back and letters sent to the address he had given were not answered. He did this twice again with the same result. His mother and sister died without seeing him again. The rest of his sad story will be told later at its proper place.

After his resignation from the Islamia College Abdul Aziz had no earned income. Ghulam Nabi increased his allowance from Rs. 500 to Rs. 1,000. This enabled him to maintain his old lifestyle. He bought a lot of books, entertained his friends at expensive restaurants, and went to Rankin's (Lahore's finest and most expensive outfitter) for his clothes. For moving about and his exercise he kept two horses and a victoria. He had learnt riding in the company of Prince Bahawal Khan at the Nawab's stables in Bahawalpur and kept it up in London by joining a riding club in Hammersmith. He had a good seat. In Hissar too he had kept a horse. Now in Lahore he used the horses for two purposes. In the morning he went to the college on a horse and on alternate afternoons went for a long ride on the riding strip which ran from the Kashmir Road end of Government House up to the canal and continued along the left bank of the canal up to the Firozepur Road bridge. (It existed up to the early 1950s). Riding to work was not an uncommon practice in the Lahore of those days. Even earlier we are told that Maulana Muhammad Husain Azad used to get to Government College from his house on horseback.

The reasons are easy to understand. Very few people could afford to run a car; even most British civil officers came to office on horseback. Only few Indians copied them. My father's use of a horse was a mark of his Anglicization.

The victoria was meant for the use of the family. My father rarely needed it, and it was the women who used it for visiting and shopping. My sisters went to school by this transport. My mother did all her shopping in Anarkali and on the Mall by the victoria, and showed the guests around the city in it.

A few months after the move to Qutb Road Piranditti died and her remains were taken to Batala for burial. The family was minus one member and my mother became the head of the household and one of the elders of the extended family. Towards the end of the same year she gave birth to a daughter who was named Fakhira; she died at the age of one year.

In 1924 Azizuddin died in Batala, and soon afterwards Ghulam Nabi was struck down by paralysis. On 30 March Mama Majid's wife, Habib, died and my mother brought her two daughters, Husanara who was 5 years old and Jahanara who was only 2, with her to Lahore. On 8 March 1925 the last of Zainab's daughters, Kishwar, was born. It was very hard to bring up Majid's two daughters without a mother and therefore Zainab arranged his second marriage to Habib's sister Iqbai, universally called Bali, which came off on 30 December 1925. Two months later Ghulam Nabi died in Batala. After his death Wazir moved to my father's house in Lahore, and henceforth divided her time between her two brothers. This was February 1926.

On Ghulam Nabi's death his property and other assets were divided among the heirs. After casting up the estimated income from his inheritance Abdul Aziz reckoned that he would not have to work in future to live well. He could now enjoy life as a gentleman of private means in great comfort and devote all his time to his literary and scholarly pursuits. This, he thought, would be an ideal life: ample income, an understanding wife, and all the time in the world to read and write.

My mother was opposed to these future plans. Women are mistresses of the house. They run the household, make the budget, spend the money, employ and pay the servants, decide how much to give away on marriages, betrothals, birthdays and other such occasions. In our family, and this would probably be true of most families of that class, men have never interested themselves in domestic economy.

Their duty is to earn or otherwise provide the money. It is the women's responsibility and privilege to spend it. Except for such important occasions as a child's marriage, the woman of the house is the finance minister, the accountant general and the treasurer rolled into one. Her authority is generally unquestionable. This makes her corresponding obligation an onus of great burden.

Zainab knew this. She had seen Zuhra and Nur running much bigger houses and learnt much from them. Ghulam Nabi had rarely interested himself in the hows and whys of spending money. A husband who was also a bookkeeper of the family was an oddity. Abdul Aziz had never attended to this aspect of family life. Even as a practising lawyer he had given Zainab every penny that he earned and the five hundred rupees his father sent to him. It was she who gave him his club subscription, paid his other bills, bought him tobacco, cigars and cigarettes, got his clothes tailored, and asked him how much he needed for buying books. Abdul Aziz had never protested. In fact, the arrangement suited him perfectly. He had no time, he used to say, for matters of pelf. That was the woman's domain.

My father's decision to live on his inheritance worried my mother. She knew his extravagant habits and his carefree attitude towards money. He should have learnt the value of money during his stay in England where there was no mother or wife to control the strings of his purse. But the allowance from his father was so generous that he could afford to spend freely. Fortunately he neither drank nor gambled, and his allowance could meet all his extravagances.

Zainab knew the value of money. She had seen her mother and then Nur keeping accounts of what came in and what was spent and where. Nur was a rich woman and yet she kept an account book and once in a while insisted that Ghulam Nabi too should have a look at it. Trained in this school of economic planning, however large the funds

available, Zainab had learnt one lesson. If her home had a well brim-ful of rupees and everyday she took out of it as much as she wanted but nothing was ever put into it, the deepest and the largest well in the world would not last for ever. Money was not water that nature replenished in an automatic and unending process. A series of outgoings without any incomings would only lead to disaster.

Zainab did not come from a poor home. Her father had a respectable income and rich perks. After her marriage she saw how and on what high standard the haveli in Batala was run. Then she spent four years in Kabul where the family lived on a princely scale. On her husband's return, his independent income as a lawyer and then a teacher was supplemented by an allowance from his father. When this income stopped the allowance was enhanced to make up the deficit. And now her husband insisted that they must live on the income of a legacy. She did not like it.

But she was not a free woman. She had given a pledge to her husband six years ago when he had stopped practising law. She would never stand in his way, never thwart his desires, never foil his purpose, and never impede the realization of his ambitions.

Not only that. She had promised to lend a hand in the progress and completion of his intellectual work. She fully knew her husband's wishes and interests. But she could not measure the intensity of the ardour of his aspirations, the depth of his craving, the degree of his yearnings, the magnitude of his longings, the reach of his vision, the scope of his desires, the length to which he was prepared to go to achieve his objectives, and the sacrifices he would gladly make to attain what was his life's real end. She expressed her fears and apprehensions a few times, sometimes in muted accents, sometimes in ringing words. He chose not to hear her. His creed brooked no obstacles and saw no difficulties. Obsession never does. She kept quiet.

What was this tumult which was driving Abdul Aziz like a whirlwind? He had never forgotten an afternoon in London when he, Abdullah Yusuf Ali and Mahmud Shirani had gone for tea to a restaurant in Leicester Square in the summer of 1906. The talk had turned to their future intellectual ideals. What did they really want to do? What could make life worth living? Shirani had a very clear idea of what he wanted to do. He would collect coins and manuscripts, read widely in oriental letters, and write on Persian and Urdu literature. Abdullah Yusuf Ali, then a young Indian Civil Service officer, had read law at Cambridge, and developed a keen interest in English literature. He said his administrative duties did not leave him much leisure but it was his ambition to specialize in Indian history of the Muslim and British periods, specially its cultural aspects.

Abdul Aziz was too young to have made up his mind in as clear-cut terms as his two friends. He had just started to read widely and deeply in several fields simultaneously. His tender sensibilities could not yet beat a path to his ideals. He confessed to this. Abdullah Yusuf Ali, wise in years (he had read more widely and to greater benefit than most British graduates of Oxbridge) and expansive in intellect (he was capable of thinking on his feet), advised Abdul Aziz to do the following: read as much as you can digest of European literature, economics, philosophy, anthropology and the principles of historiography, and then study Mughal Indian history in the light of what you have read on the West.

The Mughal period is crying for a proper description and assessment. Attend to that and you will make a mark as a historian. For this you must perfect your knowledge of the Persian language and add to it a good command of French. You need to be able to read German, a difficult language, because the German historians who have meditated on the final purpose and meaning of history have a lot to tell us. They have enriched, and are still enriching,

our real understanding of what history should do to enlighten us about the way the world moves. Read Ranke and his contemporaries. That will open your eyes. Then apply that to your study of Mughal history and you will achieve a new insight. Then start writing.

It sometimes happens that while watching a film a particular scene or a snatch of conversation, which is perhaps not very important or special or even crucial to the unfolding of the story, catches one's attention and is imbedded in one's subconscious. Years pass but this strip of the film refuses to leave you. It lives inside you. That is how Abdullah Yusuf Ali's words lodged themselves in my father's mind. When I was old enough to understand these things he repeated this conversation to me so many times that I think what I have written above comes very near to the exact words which he quoted to me.

The seeds of his ambition to be a Mughal historian were thus sown in London in a casual conversation in 1906. He began to water the soil immediately after that. He attended lectures on the subjects mentioned in the talk, he started learning French and German, and he improved his Persian under the guidance of Shirani, Nicholson and the Bilgrami brothers. On his return to India he continued his studies. In the *mofussil*, dusty, small, backward towns where he practised law there were no distractions, and he read as much as he could. In Lahore he continued his reading, but now they had a focus. He began to survey, read and digest the original sources of Mughal history. There were no Mughal historians in Lahore and he had to depend on his own initiative and judgement. He consulted his colleague at Islamia College, Mulla Umar, for all difficulties met with in Persian prose. He discussed his work and problems with Shirani, who, though no historian, proved a wise and useful guide. He talked to Maulavi Muhammad Shafi of Oriental College who had learnt a great deal from his Cambridge teachers. He was surprised to discover that even the

political history of the Mughals had not been properly chronicled for the modern reader. He decided to start with the reign of Emperor Shahjahan whom he liked as a king, as the greatest patron of art and architecture India had produced, and the rich and luxurious royal life that he led amid the finest objets d'art of the age. He spent the years 1924-26 in a close study of Shahjahan's reign and was now ready to start writing.

In his Lahore years his social life was confined to a small circle of close friends: Abdul Qadir, Mahmud Shirani, Sirajuddin Azar, Muhammad Shafi, and two or three British ICS officers who were his riding companions and had some interest in Indian history. Iqbal introduced him to Nawab Zulfiqar Ali Khan of Malerkotla, and he visited him occasionally at his Queen's Road mansion. Lala Sita Ram Kohli and Lala Amlok Ram, the history teachers at Government College, Bhupal Singh, who taught English at Dyal Singh College, Gulshan Rai, who taught history at S.D. College, and Muhammad Saeed, who taught philosophy at Government College, were his casual visitors.

When Abdullah Yusuf Ali came to Lahore as principal of Islamia College in October 1925 Abdul Aziz was thrilled at the reunion, and for the one year they were together, they met about twice a week. Abdul Aziz reminded him of their 1906 conversation back in London and told him that his sage advice was now beginning to bear fruit. The senior friend was so glad.

In October Abdul Aziz rented out his Qutb Road bungalow and moved to village Ballamabad with his family. A new and very eventful chapter opened in his life.

THE VILLAGE, A SON, AND *HIR*: 1926-1934

Coming to a village to manage his agricultural estate was a throw-back to his grandfather's feudal days in

Kahnuwan which he had not seen but heard much about. But Zainab had been told a lot more by Zuhra when they were together in Kabul. For her, therefore, it was re-living a past which was both strange and familiar. For Abdul Aziz the zamindari was more of a strain than a luxury, but the time he spent in the village transformed his entire life for other reasons. He had a son who lived. He fell in love with a Punjabi epic which commanded his devotion for the next 38 years. He also broke into print on Mughal history from the rural depths of this hamlet. He married off his two older daughters in these years. Life was eventful indeed.

In the fourth quarter of the nineteenth century the British had laid out a unique canal irrigation network in the Punjab, the largest of its kind in the world, which changed the economic fortunes of the province for all foreseeable years. In particular the bare and barren lands lying in the west were transformed into fecund and luxuriant fields. To administer these tracts new towns were established and soon made district headquarters. The best known of these were Montgomery (now called Sahiwal) and Lyallpur (now called Faisalabad).

The village which was to be Abdul Aziz's home for the next eight years lay in district Lyallpur, which was the end-product of the Lower Chenab Canal project. The construction of the Khanki Headworks was started in the winter of 1889 and completed in January 1892. The colonizing operations began in February 1892 and were completed in 1905. In all 1.7 million acres of freshly irrigated land was sold or distributed to capitalists, yeomen, peasants, nomad grazers, camel breeders and zamindars of surrounding areas. The entire area was known as Chenab Colony, and it included the future Lyallpur district, parts of the Chiniot and Jhang *tahsils* of Jhang district, half of the Khanqah Dogran *tahsil* of Gujranwala, and a few estates in the Sharaqpur *tahsil* of the Lahore district.

The founding of the town of Lyallpur came about in an interesting manner. Before the colonization operations there were numerous *théhs* or mounds which were the sites of once-upon-a-time towns and villages, scattered mostly over the highest parts of the region known as Sandal Bar. One such mound called Pakka Mari was situated in the centre of the Bar on the edge of an old natural drain known as Khunsarwala. The road from Jhang to Lahore passed through this locality, and the travellers used to stop here to take rest or spend a night. With time a small village of herdsmen sprung up around the mound. Gradually this place became well known, partly because it was perhaps the only place throughout the Bar with a settled habitation and partly because of the presence of a holy man named Nur Shah Wali who had come from Afghanistan to spread Islam in the days of al Hujweri Data Ganj Bakhsh. (The *théh* of Pakka Mari still exists in the graveyard of Mohalla Tariqabad near the tomb of Nur Shah).

About the year 1884-85 the deputy commissioner of Jhang, while on his way to Lahore, encamped at Pakka Mari for a day or so. He found it a most suitable place for the establishment of a civil station and market town for the Chenab Canal Colony. He submitted his proposal to the Lieutenant Governor who approved the scheme. Sir Ganga Ram, the famous civil engineer, was asked to prepare a plan of the proposed town. He designed the new town on the pattern of the Union Jack flag. It was in the shape of a big square which was divided into four equal squares with a site for a clock tower in the centre. Eight bazaars radiated from the clock tower site, and all of them were interlinked by a circular road. At its establishment the area of the new town was three square miles. The foundation was laid in 1896 and it was named Lyallpur after Sir James Lyall, the then Lieutenant Governor of the province. On the death of Shah Faisal bin Abdul Aziz, the ruler of Saudi Arabia, in 1977 it was renamed Faisalabad by the rulers of Pakistan.

In 1896 the town was connected with Wazirabad by a railway track. The clock tower was built in 1903-05. The town was made the district headquarters on 1 December 1904, and the first deputy commissioner was O. A. Henriques of the Indian Civil Service.

Our village, called Ballamabad, lay about 25 miles north-west of Layallpur town in the direction of Chak Jhumra and Jhang. Its full address was: Ballamabad, Chak No. 17, Jhang Branch, Post office Korutana, via Chak Jhumra, district Lyallpur. No metalled road connected it with the district headquarters or any other town. It was the back of beyond in the rural depth of the Bar. In its size it was slightly larger than a hamlet and somewhat smaller than the average village.

Its configuration and shape was the result of the haphazard way in which it must have developed. Our haveli lay on one side, backing on to our lands. There was a mosque about fifty yards to its north-east. Three houses stood next to our house on the south-west. A village "green" (in fact a dry vacant piece of land) separated the rest of the village from our house. Beyond the village on the other side ran a canal from which irrigation drains flowed out to water the fields.

Ghulam Nabi had bought ten squares of agricultural land here when he was in Kabul. My father and his brother inherited the estate and the haveli in the village. As all other fields around the village were parcelled out in small holdings our estate was the biggest in the region. The entire population of the village, about 150 persons in all, worked on our land and was therefore our *ryot* (*rayyat*) or tenants. There must have been almost 60 or 70 adult men or women who constituted the labour force. The rest were old persons or children. There was one tiny grocery shop in the village, and one small smithy which repaired agricultural implements.

The person who had had this estate on lease before Abdul Aziz moved in had a number of animals – cows, buffaloes, bullocks, oxen, horses and dogs – which he sold to my father

before leaving. There was no electricity, no tap water, no proper bathrooms, no modern comforts of any kind. Coming from Lahore my father must have found the lack of amenities a trial. Having lived in luxury for so many years was no preparation for this level of rural life. I wonder how an England-returned barrister coped with his new lifestyle. But I know he did for eight years without getting the sulks or letting it weigh on him. He was a very resilient man.

As one half of the estate belonged to my uncle Hamid, who was in the Punjab Civil Service and lived wherever he was posted, my father entered into an understanding with him that he would manage the entire estate by himself, take all decisions about sowing and rotation of crops, deal with the revenue officials and the tenants, look after the harvesting, arrange for the product to be transported to Lyallpur and other market towns, pay the water rate and other cesses and maintain all accounts. Hamid insisted that in this situation Abdul Aziz should accept a portion of his (Hamid's) income. This, he said, was only fair as the older brother would be taking over responsibility for his (Hamid's) half of the estate also. My father did not want any payment for what he would be doing in looking after Hamid's half of the estate. But in the face of Hamid's insistence it was finally settled that the net income of the land would be divided between the two brothers in the proportion of 60% and 40%, the larger share going to Abdul Aziz and the smaller to Hamid.

But the one thing Abdul Aziz found beyond his capacity was to supervise and manage the everyday work of the tenants and to maintain the books of account. In this even Zainab could not help him. For this job a man of honesty and integrity was needed. My father thought he had found him in the son-in-law of his sister Allah Rakhi who had no job. So Akbar Jafri was employed. But he proved to be undependable and also corrupt. Taking advantage of Abdul Aziz's ignorance he made money on the side and falsified

the accounts. For example, one year he told my father that the cotton crop grown on one square of land had turned out to be defective and must be destroyed. The flaw, he said, lay in its brown colour (which, in fact, was a mark of the superior quality of cotton). He carted the entire harvest of the year to Lyallpur clandestinely, sold it at a good price and pocketed the sale proceeds. Ultimately he had to be sacked. But it was too late, and a lot of damage had been done.

The most difficult problem which my father faced was to pretend to act as a zamindar. He was the grandson of Waziruddin, a typical feudal lord, to the manner born. He was also the grandson of Zuhra, the poised and self-assured chatelaine and for some years a feudal lady in her own right. But here the genes failed. Abdul Aziz was an English-trained and highly urbanized gentleman, a scholar and writer, imbued with Western values, unfit to order people around. He lacked the arrogance, hauteur and the high opinion of himself which make a good zamindar. At times he just did not know how to deal with the tenants.

That is where Zainab filled the vacuum. She was the daughter of a *tahsildar*, an official who, in the world of revenue administration, can at times afford, or has to, behave and act like a zamindar. The tenants treat him as only a few steps lower than the landholder himself. Though Zainab had left her father's house when she was only 18 her young, impressionable mind had observed the exercise and manifestation of the authority of her father and retained its memories. More important than that, she had absorbed much of what Zuhra had told her about her life and station in Kahnuwan and specially the contours and the cut and shape of her exclusive power after Waziruddin's death. With no idea that one day she would be called upon to act as a chatelaine herself Zainab had learnt many lessons from Zuhra's lengthy reminiscences. They came ready to hand now. Abdul Aziz was astonished by the seemingly practised

ease with which his wife counselled him on how to tackle a knotty problem or deal with an obstreperous tenant-at-will. Her worldly wisdom saved the amateur landlord from many awkward situations.

But there was one difference between Zainab and Zuhra. Zainab was humble by nature. She had the knack of pleasing her inferiors without compromising her dignity. She did not regard it beneath her status to visit the tenants' women in their homes, sit with them and talk to them person to person, not mistress to serf. This endeared her to the commonalty and indirectly benefitted her husband. When Zainab had a son and announced that for his first three years her baby would only wear the used clothes of the tenant's children of his age she came even closer to their hearts. By nature Zainab was soft-spoken and earnest in her talk. In the eyes of the villagers she could do no wrong. In this way my mother acted as the contrary of my father, and averted, ameliorated or softened many of my father's gaucheries, mistakes born of inexperience and wrong decisions taken because of lack of knowledge.

Another ally of Abdul Aziz was bureaucracy, which came to his aid in two ways. My uncle Hamid was in the provincial civil service. For two years of my father's stay in Ballamabad he was Additional District Magistrate of Lyallpur. Even when he was posted elsewhere the knowledge that half of the estate belonged to "Deputy Sahib" (as he was known during all his official life) kept the tenant away from any mischief.

Another happy chance worked in favour of the reluctant zamindar. Throughout his stay the deputy commissioners of Lyallpur district were either Englishmen whom he had known in England or Indian who were interested in the phenomenon of a barrister-scholar trying to run a zamindari in a God-forsaken part of their parish.

When Abdul Aziz arrived in the village the district officer was C. V. Salusbury, and in 1927 he was succeeded

by Alan Mitchell. He called at them as a matter of courtesy, and discovered that they had already met in England. They responded and were amused to see him struggling with the task of running an estate. After them came an Indian for two short, officiating spells. Malik Muhammad Hayat Khan Noon had met Abdul Aziz in Lahore at Nawab Zulfiqar Ali Khan's house and again in Lyallpur at the residence of Mian Fazl-i-Husain's younger half-brother, Afzal Husain, who was teaching agronomy at the Punjab University of Agriculture. Noon often visited Ballamabad to see my father. He was the father of Sir Firoz Khan Noon, then a rising politician in the province. He was succeeded by two ICS officers, J. E. Keough and A. A. MacDonald. Keough came to see my father out of curiosity; MacDonald out of his interest in Indian history on which Abdul Aziz had by this time published a few articles. He maintained his interest in both author and subject, became a good friend, and the two men kept seeing each other until MacDonald, the last British home secretary of the Punjab, returned home in 1947.

The reader of today cannot understand the significance and magnitude of the district officers' visiting my father. He is only familiar with the Pakistani deputy commissioners who are small and spineless cogs in the official machinery, at the beck and call of the big and middling zamindars of their district, obsequious to all politicians any one of whom might get them transferred to bad stations, rather scared of the urban politicians of their area who can if they want to make their life difficult, in some cases even afraid of the district police chief, their own subordinate, whose goodwill ensures the young deputy commissioners' tranquillity of mind.

The contrast between the administrative machinery of the 1920s and 1930s and that of the independent Pakistan beggars description. Behind the deputy commissioner of the imperial age stood the might and prestige of the British Empire.

Behind the same official of today lies a rickety, creaking machinery run by third-rate, uneducated politicians or generals of the same calibre who know not how to run a civil society. The colonial district officer was in most cases an Oxbridge graduate with a first, his mind finely trained, his sense of responsibility very high, and his spirit of duty developed to an unbelievable level. His Pakistani successor is an inevitable reflection of the abysmal educational standards which have produced him. He is without integrity, dignity, good manners, efficiency and even a trace of moral courage.

The district officer of my father's Ballamabad days was no less than a god to the district. Though he mixed with the lowest of the low and discussed their problems with sympathy when he was touring the area, yet he maintained a certain aloofness. However, he drew a fine but firm line between aloofness and arrogance. He did his duty. He was just and merciful. His orders were obeyed instantaneously. He was a paradox: an awe-inspiring figure who commanded loyalty and often affection.

Therefore when the population of Ballamabad saw that every deputy commissioner who visited the village stayed a night or two with Abdul Aziz and talked to him like a friend and as an equal the status and prestige of Abdul Aziz went up by several degrees. He never faced any problem touching law and order. Undisturbed peace ruled over the village, letting my father give all his attention to his research.

Abdul Aziz found his rustic life much happier than he had expected. The British Empire was behind him. He himself was an equable man; rather reticent, reserved, shy, withdrawn, but pleasant. Zainab's diplomacy and healing touch kept the haveli-village relations on an even keel. Life was good.

A little after my father's arrival two developments occurred which strengthened the bonds between him and the peasantry. One touched only Abdul Aziz's personal life but enhanced his status in the eyes of the villagers, and the result

was a miracle of hearts coming together under the irresistible impact of a shared infatuation.

As I have already mentioned in the chapter on my grandfather, in October 1927 King Amanullah of Afghanistan asked Abdul Aziz to come to Kabul to brief him on Europe before he set out on his tour of England and the continent. He remembered what Abdul Aziz had told his father, Amir Habibullah, in three long meetings in 1908. He now wanted to revise his knowledge of the West with Abdul Aziz's help. My father went to Kabul, stayed a week at the royal palace, paid his respect to Ulya Hazrat, revived his acquaintance with Nur-as-Siraj who was now a married woman, met Queen Surraya whom he judged to be the most intelligent Afghan woman he had known, and still the apple of Amanullah's eye, and had talks with the King's entourage which would accompany him to Europe. Amanullah was sorry that his *Apa* (Zainab) could not come, remembered her well, reminisced long about his *Amman* Nur, and recalled the affection he had been given by Ghulam Nabi. Then for a week he listened to Abdul Aziz and plied him with hundreds of questions. The sessions were lengthy but Amanullah had the enthusiasm of a young man, the curiosity of a student, and the authority of a king. Abdul Aziz came back with the ruler's gratitude, many gifts and a hundred kilograms of dry fruit in his baggage.

Amanullah left Kabul for Delhi on 7 December 1927 (four days before I was born) and on 26th. set out on his journey. The royal party visited Egypt, Italy, Germany, France, Britain, USSR, Turkey and Iran, and was back in Kabul on 1 July 1928. Abdul Aziz keenly followed the royal progress in the press, praying that all would go well. In spite of the crisis building up fast in the country, Amanullah was gracious enough to write to Abdul Aziz in August 1928 a long letter about his tour. The only thing I remember of what my father told me about this letter was that Italy had given Amanullah the warmest welcome and Britain the coolest.

But on the whole he was satisfied, and he said the Queen was excited. The letter contained a separate sheet on which Amanullah had written a short letter to his *Apa*, Zainab, who was so glad to receive it.

To the villagers the news of their zamindar's visit to a foreign country on the invitation of its King produced two results: pride in themselves because their feudal lord was no less than a friend, nay an adopted brother, of a King, and infinite regard and respect for the lord himself. For the simple, uneducated villagers living in a primitive place without radio, newspaper or school, a king was a divinity. A small part of the uncanny mystique of monarchy stuck to the person of Abdul Aziz. In the eyes of his tenants he was now several feet taller than before.

When Abdul Aziz was away in Kabul the women of the village asked Zainab about Kabul and the family's relationship with its King, and she unfolded the story during the next several days. A score of them gathered every night after the meal at the haveli and insisted on being told the entire account of my family's stay in Kabul. The *compte rendu* mesmerized them. When Zainab told them that the King who had summoned Abdul Aziz to Kabul was the adopted son of Abdul Aziz's mother and her own adopted brother, ears cocked, eyes popped out, and the room echoed to a variety of reactions: *hai*, *ah*, *achcha ji*, *wah wah*, *gal hoi naan* and such other interjections. From that day Zainab became for them *badshah di bahn* (sister of the King). The excited women carried the news to their menfolk. The standing of Abdul Aziz went tower high. My mother told me later of the remark made by one man: "When I was told Mianji had lived in *Vilayet* [England] for four years I did not believe it. Why should anyone who has lived in *Vilayet* come to live here? Now I believe it. He is the adopted brother of a king. Where else but to Vilayet he would have gone for his education." (*Mianji*: an honorific used for the

master, a respected person, an elder of the family or household, father, teacher, etc.).

The second development which riveted the bond between my father and the village was even stronger than my family's relationship with a king. I will give an account of it shortly. But first the habitation and life of the family should be described.

When Ghulam Nabi had bought this land he had a haveli erected on the side of the village where our lands lay. It was a sturdily built collection of five rooms, one veranda, and an inner courtyard with a kitchen, a bathroom and a latrine. The three rooms and one vestibule, which were placed at right angles to the other two rooms and veranda, also opened on to a large outer courtyard which served as the cattle house and stable and contained six outhouses for the men who looked after the animals. At the back of the yard lay a narrow lane and beyond it a small canal which irrigated the fields.

The house was built of small, flat Mughal-style bricks held together and covered with strong plaster. All the rooms were commodious with high ceilings, large ventilators, very heavy and wide doors and medium size windows with iron bars for security. The three pillars which supported the roof of the veranda were of an astonishing girth. If a well-built man with extra long arms embraced one of them with his arms at full stretch the fingertips of his two hands did not meet on the other side.

For the first eighteen months the house had only five inmates: my parents and three sisters. After that Abdul Aziz and Zainab had their last child, a son, on 11 December 1927, who in his old age was to write this story of the family. But there were many guests who came for long stays: *Manma* Majid's family from Jhang, *phupho* Wazir from wherever *chacha* Hamid was posted, *Manma* Hamid with his wife and children, and less often *chacha* Hamid.

Whether the family alone was living in the house or there were a dozen guests there was no problem of

attendants and helpers. My parents had brought four servants from Lahore. One of them, called Maddi, was an excellent cook, equally trained in local and Western cuisine. His cakes and puddings were delectable, so was the "hunter" beef prepared by him. Another servant acted as a bearer and the other two cleaned and dusted the house. For all or any other work there were over a dozen women from the village at my mother's disposal. Even if there was nothing for them to do they would come and talk to my mother or sit quietly in the courtyard awaiting the summons.

All vegetables and several fruits were grown on our own land. In the summer mango season baskets of the best varieties were sent from the Agricultural University's extensive farms by Mian Afzal Husain from Lyallpur where he was teaching at the university. Wheat and maize were local crops and they were ground in the village *kharas* (corn mill). Sugar cane was grown on our land and brown sugar and *gur* prepared in a small room across the channel of water. All other "modern" requirements like white sugar, tea, biscuits, rusks, cigarettes, cigars, etc. were bought during periodical visits to Lyallpur or brought from Lahore by my father in his regular visits there. There was a hand pump in the inner courtyard and the village boys operated it in relays. In the absence of electricity lamps brought from Kabul were in use and the supply of kerosene oil was assured by the only local shopkeeper who went to Chak Jhumra (the nearest market town, about seven miles away) for his purchases every fortnight. In summers labourers from the village pulled at the ropes of the old-fashioned wooden ceiling fans to which lengths of cloth were affixed to move the air.

However inexperienced and reluctant the squire of Ballamabad, he lived the life of a feudal lord.

My father had begun his serious and concentrated study of the Mughal period of Indian history when he was teaching at Islamia College. He must have started with Babur or

perhaps with the conqueror's progenitors in Central Asia, but for his first writing he chose Emperor Shahjahan. His treatment was partly a chronicle of his reign and partly a study of his court and the army. The first part, the chronicle, appeared in two lengthy instalments in 1927-28 in the *Journal of Indian History* of Madras (then edited by Dr. S. Krishnaswami Aiyangar, Professor of Indian History and Archaeology at the University of Madras), published from Srijayavasam, 1 East Mada Street, Mylapore.

The three long chapters on "Mughal Court and Camp" and "The Mughal Army" were published in 1930, 1932 and 1933 in the same journal. So work on this history must have been done partly in Lahore and partly in Ballamabad. This was the first detailed history of the reign based on original sources ever to be published. The two later chapters served as the forerunners of his plan of an 8-volume sustained study of "The Mughal Indian Court and Its Institutions: A close-range Survey of Facts and details from Original Persian and Contemporary European Sources." Only six volumes could be written before financial difficulties and old age stopped further progress. While writing on Shahjahan my father fell in love with the Mughal Emperor and praised him so often to his friends that half-jokingly and half-earnestly they began to call him "Abdul Aziz Shahjahani"; he welcomed the sobriquet and was pleased. The title stuck to his name for many years.

My father soon set a routine for himself and lived by it as long as he was in Ballamabad. He was an early riser, and his day started with a 2-hour walk through the fields which took him to the various vicinal villages. Twice a week a long horse ride took the place of the walk. Back home he took a bath, had his breakfast, and then worked till lunchtime. In summers he slept for two hours after lunch, and in winters continued his studies after a short rest. The afternoon tea was taken at 4 P.M., and then till sunset he met with the more

prominent of the peasants. After an early dinner he coached his children for an hour or so and then retired for the night.

At some time in 1927 an unexpected act of God changed the intellectual, mental and literary tenor of his life and kept him chained to his desk for the next 38 years. Two or three times a week he had a meeting in the sitting room with some of the senior tenants, the *patwari*, the *lambardar*, the *zaildar* and some occasional visitors from the neighbouring villages. As was expected they discussed what touched their lives closely: village life, the weather, crops, harvesting, prospects for the rain, prices of agricultural produce, the state of the markets at Chak Jhumra and Lyallpur, the health of the cattle, desilting of the canals, supply of irrigation water, and miscellaneous news of the village and the region. Those present were served *lassi* or *sharbat* made of brown sugar (the traditional Punjabi cold drinks) in the summer and Kashmiri tea in winter months. To this was added the sweetmeats brought or sent from Lyallpur and cakes and savouries made at home by Maddi. They never developed a taste for the cakes, no matter how hard he worked on them. Some of the guests called them *Mianji di miththi roti* (the squire's sweet bread).

One day one of the men present said that he had heard of a fakir or dervish visiting a village not too far away who recited Waris Shah's *Hir* superbly well. He said to my father, "*Mianji*, if you allow us to invite him to Ballamabad for a few days we will look after him. We will be happy to listen to him. If you are interested in *Hir* we can arrange a sitting here in the haveli so that you can judge how good he is."

In the Punjab countryside, small towns and among some even in the cities the reading, reciting and listening to the *Hir* had been the villagers' chief and perhaps the only pleasure. After the exhausting labour of the long day the tillers, the labourers and the peasants would get together in the evening for a gossip, and often one of them who had a good voice recited passages from the Punjabi poetical

epics, most often from the *Hir*. It is impossible for a Westerner and today even for the Punjabi city-dweller to understand or even conceive the magical hold of this epic on the minds and hearts of the rural and urban folk of those times. For over a century for the Muslims and Sikhs *Hir* had brought more pleasure and inspired greater love than Shakespeare or Goethe or Dante in his respective country in any age or time. Nor was a comparable phenomenon to be seen in any other part of India. People sang or listened to folk-songs. But *Hir* transported them to a different, higher world, where even the untutored rustic heart would respond to the story and the lilt of the reciter with a heart which began to flutter and a pulse which began to beat faster. The epic cast a spell on all irrespective of age, sex, locality, profession or education. For as long as the recitation continued the magic turned the common man and woman into an uncommon, spirited, vibrantly responsive, rapt and enthralled human being.

My father knew that *Hir* was the crown and summit of Punjabi poetry. In his childhood and boyhood he had heard his grandmother and mother recite melodiously a few snatches of it. Once a dervish had come to his father's house in Amritsar and his performance had left a pleasant impression on his memory. Then he had gone to England. Old memories had died in a new world. Now that this man mentioned the itinerant dervish and sought his permission to have him in Ballamabad he said casually, "Oh well, if you want him here get him over. I will also hear him recite *Hir*." All those present were pleased that the zamindar had agreed and even promised to attend the recital.

Villages lie close to each other. Next morning a messenger went to fetch the fakir, but he said he would come a day later. When he reached Ballamabad, a peasant put him up in his house and Abdul Aziz was informed of his arrival. He instructed that the visitor should be brought

to the haveli the following afternoon. All those who wanted to hear him should also come. He too would be present to see if the singer lived up to his reputation.

What happened next day coloured and dominated the 43 years of my father's remaining life. What he heard supplied him with a theme on which he laboured ceaselessly and devotedly for the next 38 years.

It seemed as if the whole village had turned up to hear the dervish. He came, sat down, talked to my father for a few minutes, and then recited two or three stanzas. He paused. A stunning silence enveloped the large room in which his melodious words continued to float. My father said, "*Baba*, Recite some more." The dervish noticed a ring of plea in my father's words. He resumed reciting, and now there was a new note in his voice as if a power stronger than him, beyond his own control, had taken over. He was a mere conduit, a channel, a means, for transmitting a heavenly message. He didn't stop for the next two hours. In these two hours my father's life changed for ever. His heart leaped in his breast, took many somersaults, and refused to settle. He felt as if the tree of his life had till this moment been waiting for the gentle morning breeze, and now the Zephyr had begun to blow its way. The melody in the voice of the dervish swept him into a world where he could hear the dewdrops falling on the rose petal. The tale told by the words entwined itself around his soul. For twenty years he had been reading poetry in six languages of the East and the West, beautiful words and phrases summoned up or coined by sensitive minds. But the experience of this day was totally out of this world. It set his thoughts on fire. It illumined his imagination. It startled and awakened his desire for unutterable things. The story left an impress on his mind which he found impossible to eradicate or erase. The notes of the melody uncovered many secrets. Hearing it led to an unknown sphere, solving many mysteries, removing

many doubts, reconfirming his faith in God and true love. The beat of the heart was uncontrollable, wild and unruly, and created a tumult in the soul, but it was a strange hurricane because it led to a calm in life. All tensions were resolved, all stresses removed, all reservations obliterated, all anxieties blotted out. The lifelong search for peace of mind came to an end. The light of self-awareness lit the inner being. The door to many mysteries of creation flew open as if the story of *Hir* was a spiritual key.

When the echoes of the voice of the dervish ceased Abdul Aziz's mind owned those echoes and made them ring in his mind. Tears were rolling down his cheeks. The heart was being washed clean with the water shed by the eyes. Water, a cleansing element in all traditions, was cleaning his heart in order to receive a new revelation. He was crying like a child who does not know why he is crying. Neither the place nor the occasion mattered. He forgot that the people around him were his *rayyat* before whom he had always behaved with rigid formality. He was unconscious of where he was sitting. He only remembered one thing: that the flow in the voice of the dervish had imparted to the story of *Hir* an intoxicating power beyond the inebriety of the most potent wine. Pearls and rubies of new meanings had been threaded on the golden twine of a voice. When Truth appeared attired in music it opened his eyes to the essence of Reality. Every turn and twist of the story opened new vistas and avenues, each beckoning him to travel in search of reality, each promising untold pleasures. Every stanza pointed to a new path leading to the core of life itself. In every word was the light of morn. When my father left the assembly the wonder in his heart matched that in the gazelle's eye.

Twenty years later, when I was studying English literature at Government College, Lahore, and was able to understand, however imperfectly, the power of words and the message of poetry, I asked my father,

"What really happened to you on that memorable day?"

"Don't ask me that, son. I can only say that on that fateful day I was born again. It was my second birth. My real birth."

"But you must tell me, for my edification, why the story affected you so much. I want to know why it had such a great impact on your mind. What is the secret of this soul-stirring effect? If you can enlighten me on this point you will help me in understanding your mind and also the epic when, one day, I come to read it? Please tell me how and why it entered your soul and made its habitation there."

What my father told me in reply, and repeated several times later when I was more mature, is etched upon my mind. At this distance of time I cannot give the reader his exact words, but blessed with a good memory, I can paraphrase what he said, at places repeating his own phrases, as the conversation lives in my mind, not necessarily in its original succession of sentences.

According to him, "a nerve was touched by an exquisite feeling, and the sensation vibrated to the heart. The story was as soft as music, as light as spray. Now pleasure sickened into pain; now pain merged into pleasure; now the two lived together; nudging each other, embracing each other; their contrariness a reflection of the supremely tragic end of the story and the spiritual loveliness of the meaning behind the words. The passion in the story silenced the doubts of profane reason. Its appeal was as inexhaustible as a river now flowing calm now in full flood. It taught me that though our time is as brief as the flash struck on a stone, we can reach and touch the sky and make our love immortal. Poetry is cadence in words. Words! Words express and transmit knowledge. All knowledge ends in wonder. Flames consume darkness. The light of knowledge dispels the blackness of ignorance. In all my years to come the tale has been a haunting tune in the head.

Love creates all great literature, and makes literature as immortal as itself. Love blows across life, careless of time or space, making its own meeds, creating its own conventions, shaping its own contours, moulding its own images, entertaining its own hopes, conjuring its own fears, living its own life, dying its own death – proud, erect, everlasting, immortal, eternal, divine. I found this love in the story. Love is a monarch who dominates us from within, capturing us to the last remnant and forbidding us to glance back. Waris Shah sings of what is past, or passing, or to come. *Hir* is an immutable truth held fast in noble rhymes. He is a shimmering lyricist. In him I heard melody mounting into the skies. I felt as if I had heard the voice of God. At times the melody was so sad as if a human heart was breaking in each separate note. The song was like water bubbling from a silver jar. Wild chords of splendid crashing music swept through my brain, intoxicating and exultant."

Without realizing it, he had found work to do for the long years that remained of his life in this world.

Next week he took two steps. He sent a servant to Lyallpur to buy all the available copies of the various editions and texts of *Hir*. And he employed a schoolmaster from a village across the big canal to come everyday to teach him how to read Punjabi fluently and explain the meanings of unfamiliar words and convoluted constructions. During the next two months he went through the texts purchased from Lyallpur. A cursory reading was enough to show that the story of *Hir* had been told in verse by several poets. During his next visit to Lahore he bought some more editions from Kashmiri Bazaar.

Then he sat down to make a careful study of all the texts. A series of comparative readings convinced him that Waris Shah's work was infinitely superior to the Hir epic composed by other poets in everything that made good poetry. This opinion led to a deep analysis of all the texts

attributed to him. He spent two years on this task and finally his wide reading and careful analysis led him to the discovery that the book published in his name (and of this too there is a bewildering and grossly misleading variety) contains several verses which don't appear to be the authentic work of Waris Shah. This finding made him decide to prepare a true and correct text of Waris Shah's *Hir*. Verses of low quality were bringing a bad name to the poet. The damage did not stop here. It was impossible to write a proper history of Punjabi poetry (and therefore Punjabi literature) until the scholars had in their hands Waris Shah's epic with all interpolations, additions, errors, intercalations, intrusions, and wrong attributions, excluded. The preparation of a correct text of the story was a work of imperative priority and, though he was not a scholar of Punjabi nor a literary historian or critic, he took it upon himself to execute it.

Henceforth he bifurcated his working week into three days devoted to *Hir* and three days reserved for historical research. He never worked on Sundays.

Chaos reigned in the variety and proliferation of Waris Shah's *Hirs* in the market. Even well-established and respectable bookstores of Kashmiri Bazaar of Lahore published, stocked and sold the various editions, prints and reprints without discrimination and without providing any guidance or help to the buyer and the reader. Several publications copied each other. None even attempted to distinguish one print from another. Therefore the pile of printed volumes in circulation that he had collected was of no use to him.

No variorum edition could be prepared without the help of the manuscripts of the epic. In about 1928-29 he began his search for old, hand-written texts of Waris Shah's *Hir*. He enlisted the help of his friends. The man who came to his assistance in a big way was Hafiz Mahmud Shirani,

who was now teaching at the Oriental College, Lahore. He was not only one of the finest scholars of Urdu and Persian in India but, what was more relevant to my father's venture, an unsurpassed judge of the authenticity, age and quality of a manuscript. He directed some of his students and research assistants to look around, make inquiries and inform Abdul Aziz of the existence and availability of a manuscript. He himself would test the quality of it once it had been located and the possibilities of its acquisition or use explored.

Another friend who was of much help was one of my father's old colleagues at Islamia College. Professor Sirajuddin Azar had by now left the college and joined the Punjab provincial education service as an inspector of schools. He too was a specialist of old, hand-written texts. He was an excellent judge of the age of a manuscript which he estimated from the state of the paper used and the style and peculiar characteristics of the handwriting. In most cases his judgement stood the test of time. My father had complete confidence in him.

Chacha Hamid was in the provincial civil service and later rose to be a deputy commissioner. My father asked him to make inquiries wherever he was posted about the existence of any manuscript or a part of it in the haveli or *déra* of any zamindar, or in a mosque, or in any private collection. If he found one anywhere he should use every ounce of his official authority or personal relationship or indirect influence to borrow or acquire it. A few manuscripts were purchased or freely acquired through my uncle. Another source was purely commercial. When the news spread around that there was a customer, discerning but wealthy, of the *Hir* manuscripts several dealers and antiquarians came to Ballamabad with their wares. My father bought some from them.

These exertions and efforts resulted in a valuable collection of 50 to 60 manuscripts, for some of which my father paid very high prices. After due investigation and study of them carried out in consultation with Shirani and Azar

about a dozen were found to be either fake or otherwise undependable. They were excluded from consultation. Then the real long labour began of collating them.

This was hard, dull and time-consuming work, demanding much patience, physical stamina, keen literary evaluation, a good eye for the quality and reliability of each manuscript, a deep understanding of Waris Shah's style and likes and dislikes, and a mature judgement of good and bad in poetry. It sounds incredible that this task was undertaken and completed by a man who had no prior knowledge of the Punjabi language or literature. The wonder of it all is that the final text produced by him won the approval and praise of the Punjabi literary establishment in Pakistan and India, and still stands as the most correct and true text ever prepared.

A work of such quality demanded exceptional devotion and hard work, and my father gave these without stint. A modus operandi was evolved and followed till the end of the exercise. Every line of every manuscript was read several times, and then similar lines or lines describing the same scene were compared with each other. They were tested by the standard of the literary language prevalent in Waris Shah's age, and consequently accepted or rejected. Apart from the language, Waris Shah, like most poets in all languages, had his own peculiar or favourite ways of describing things, emotions and incidents. After a deep and long study of the poet my father had come to recognize these characteristics and predilections very well. There were, moreover, certain words and combination of words which were patently Warisian, and offered valuable and generally unmistakable clues to the authenticity or otherwise of the text. Judged in the light of these criteria there were many lines and couplets, even some entire stanzas, which themselves proclaimed whether they were or not from Waris Shah's pen. Among the critics whom my father consulted the most knowledgeable and helpful was

Chaudhri Sir Shihabuddin, a Punjabi politician and man of letters, who had a rare insight in poetry and especially in Waris Shah's verse. The result of this collaboration was a close friendship between Abdul Aziz and Shihabuddin which lasted till the latter's death in 1949. It is a pity that he did not live long enough to see the final text in print.

All the material that my father needed for his work on *Hir* was with him in Ballamabad. But for his historical research he had to visit Lahore every second month, to borrow books from the Punjab University and Punjab Public Libraries, to return those he had finished with, and to discuss his work with his friends and other scholars. The journey was long, difficult and uncomfortable. There were two alternative routes, both involving an arduous travel from the village to the railway station by an ox cart. The nearest stations were Sahianwala and Salarwala, both about seven miles away. From there Lahore was a 72-mile journey, taking about four hours. Or, he could go to Lyallpur or Chak Jhumra and catch the Lahore train. There was no saving of time on this route; the only advantage was a choice of more train services.

As the books were heavy in weight and many in number on both sides of the journey, two sturdy young men of the village accompanied him. They lifted the loaded wooden boxes on to the ox cart, unloaded them at the station, carried them to the train, lifted them into the compartment, took them out at the Lahore station, and loaded them into the two hired *tongas*. The entire exercise was repeated on the way back. In Lahore my father stayed with Shihabuddin and, after 1933, with his second daughter Razia who lived there after her marriage.

The interesting aspect of this journey was that on their return from the first trip the two men were so full of excitement about what they had seen in Lahore that their relatives and friends clamoured to take their place in the

next visit to the provincial capital. This was a just and fair request, and my father arranged for two different men to accompany him on each journey. Thus over the years of his stay in Ballamabad every young and not so young male of the village had not only seen Lahore at least once but lived there for a few days. They became the heroes of the village and the envy of several villages in the neighbourhood.

The tales they told first to their families and then to the whole population were heard with disbelief, doubt and wonder. It must be remembered that most of the men had not even seen Lyallpur. Between the rural, primitive depths of Sandal Bar and the dazzling new civil station of Lahore lay not the terrestrial distance of 72 miles, but a world of difference in everything. The building of the railway station, the wide roads, the large bungalows, the Mall and the multi-storeyed edifices lining it, the extensive Lawrence Garden, the number of people in the bazaars, the shops, the things on sale, the food stalls, the comfortable *tongas*, the strange iron *tonga* which ran without a horse and ran very fast (the motor car) – everything they saw drew from them gasps of admiration and cries of wonder. Was all this real or were they dreaming? Some village folk did not believe what they were told till the end. The women were even more sceptical. But they had one advantage. They came to Zainab and asked her if Lahore was really like what their brothers, husbands and sons had seen. Were they exaggerating? And Zainab reassured them that their men folk were not liars, and told them many more things about Lahore. In this way Ballamabad became the best-informed and the most knowledgeable village for miles around. My father left it better educated than it was when he had moved to it.

Now let me record some family matters before wrapping up the Ballamabad story. In June 1928 Khairuddin, the husband of Abdul Aziz's sister Fatima, died in Amritsar. As my mother could not travel with a 6-

month baby (myself), my father went alone for the condolence call. Khairuddin's three older sons were married in Amritsar and Batala on three consecutive days in December 1930. Khairuddin had been a man of most modest means and during Fatima's life and after my father and *chacha* Hamid helped him financially and brought up his sons. Now the expenses of their weddings were also paid for by them.

The eldest son, Muhammad Hasan, married Rashida in Amritsar on 27 December. Then the family moved to Batala, where on 28 December my eldest sister Akhtar was married to Fatima's second son, Ahmad Hasan, whom my father had brought up and educated at Government College, Lahore. On 29 December the next son, Jamil Hasan, was married to Hanifa, a grand daughter of Abdul Aziz's eldest sister Barkat.

In March 1931 my *chacha's* wife, Sardar Begum, died while giving birth to a daughter. On 25 March of the following year Hamid married again, this time a young Pathan girl, Farrukh, domiciled in Kashmir, and immediately left for London to spend his honeymoon. In October Hakim Jan married Sughra in Lahore. On 11 November 1933 my second sister, Razia, was married in Batala to Bashir Ahmad, a graduate of our own *biradari* of the town. On 20 May 1934 Abdul Aziz's sister Wazir died in Lahore; she had separated from her husband soon after her marriage in 1888 and since then had lived first with her father and then her brothers.

Abdul Aziz's stay in Ballamabad was drawing to its close. After the marriage of the two older daughters the family was reduced to four persons: Abdul Aziz, Zainab, Kishwar and myself. *Phupho* Wazir used to spend half the year with Abdul Aziz in the village. After her death a semi-permanent but lively and loving member of the family was gone. My parents felt lonely. Zainab was used to large households and frequent guests and she felt more lonely than before. My father was fed up with his frequent, difficult and tiring journeys to Lahore.

He felt that his work on both *Hir* and Mughal history demanded his presence in Lahore.

But the most decisive factor in the move was the dwindling income from the land. Abdul Aziz had no experience of running an agricultural estate. Nor was he interested in the exercise. The manager was both lazy and dishonest, and when confronted with the unfavourable balance sheet looked up towards the heavens, a gesture which meant that it was all God's will. Abdul Aziz was helpless. He could not dismiss the son-in-law of his sister, who had no prospects for another employment. Nor could he shout at him; he was incapable of it.

Looking back at my father's life I find it surprising how he managed to pass these eight years in Ballamabad. He must have felt miserable and lived on memories and hopes. The present had little attraction. All the libraries were in Lahore, and so were most of his friends. Blood relatives were scattered in Batala, Peshawar, Amritsar, Jhang, Delhi and Lahore. The atrocious communications of Ballamabad made it very hard to keep in touch with the people whom Abdul Aziz and Zainab loved. They missed them very much. The lands were not yielding the expected income. So was there any point in living in this far-flung place?

He asked his brother to come to Ballamabad and observe the state of affairs in person. Hamid, who was at this time posted in Lahore as Additional District Magistrate and living in his own Tapp Road residence, came for a week, looked around, inspected the estate's account books, talked to the *lambardar*, the *zaildar* and the peasantry, and finally agreed with Abdul Aziz that the lands should be disposed of and the family shift to Lahore or Batala.

The estate was sold off in August 1934, and in September the family said its farewell to Ballamabad.

Was Ballamabad as bad as the impression some readers might gather from what I have written above? It had many

faults. But were they its faults? Its location was determined by God and the times. When Sandal Bar was irrigated by the British canal network hundreds of villages and hamlets appeared where before there was only a waterless wilderness. Or, perhaps Ballamabad had existed before the modern colonization began. People's virtues were inherent; their vices accidental. We have no history of villages in Pakistan. Anyhow, when Abdul Aziz moved there he must have known that he was not going to an English village. The handicaps were prescribed by nature. It is true that life in the village moved in the rhythm of the middle ages. For the people the time slept on. But these were compensations. Human beings were honest. Their sincerity had withstood the test of time. Smiles were as plentiful as air, and as cheap. Tradition was a way of life; in the city a mere memory. Love ruled the rustic society; malice was the coin of the realm in the cities.

And then there was nature. God's own nature, which the greatest city could not rival or match. Here the morning beat the twilight of dawn into flakes of fire, and then the morning swelled with light. When the rains came every tree, bush and plant was washed of all dust and there was greenery as far as the eye could travel. Then came the rainbow which painted the sky with bold strokes of colour. The autumn came and a hundred shades of red and brown were painted on the leaves. But whether the trees were green in leaf or gold in fall, it was a feast for the eyes. Even the wind had a chuckle in its voice.

Looking at the years of his stay there in the proper perspective, nobody can deny that all the three most important events of his life happened when he was living there. A son was born to him – his only son to survive and give him company as long as he was in the country. He broke into print as a Mughal historian from Ballamabad and immediately made his mark as a scholar. It was also in Ballamabad that he met *Hir*, fell in passionate love with it, and began his life

work on its textual criticism. This, too, later brought him much fame. These are not small gifts and achievements; and all of them were the bonanza which Ballamabad gave him.

He himself might have stayed aloof and at times felt unhappy. But his love for *Hir* had endeared him to the villagers. Whatever his status, they knew that their hearts and the heart of the zamindar beat in unison. Nothing is dearer to a Punjabi villager than his traditional poetry. And *Hir* was both a piece of folk tradition and a classical epic. It was an essential and inalienable part of their past. If Abdul Aziz shared this love with them he could not be an outsider. Observing his zeal and passion they knew that they did not need any further proof that he belonged to them. He may be a zamindar, a rich overlord, a city man, an England-returned barrister or much more, but he spoke Punjabi, he loved Punjabi literature, and he cried when *Hir* was recited before him. That was enough. He was integrated with the village society, not by the lands he owned, but by the basic human emotions and sentiments which bind rural society and of which the modern-day, fashionable, educated, ignorant, arrogant city slicker knows nothing.

In this marriage of minds Zainab was the principal player. Abdul Aziz, now in the middle watch of life, was reticent and aloof. He had never been the hail-fellow-well-met, black-slapping type. Thrown into the company of senior men at a young age, inheriting his father's serious outlook on life, with great intellectual ambition but no social aspirations, he was firm in character, thoughtful in conversation, contemptuous of fools, self-controlled, self-sufficient and single-minded. But he was neither stiff nor starched. However, his detachment, concentration on his work and inability to conduct small talk amounted to indifference.

On the other hand, Zainab was a good mixer. In spite of her vastly different and superior background, there was in the core of her heart a place where nothing but humility and

humanity grew. She shunned airs and graces in Ballamabad, or anywhere else. Whereas her husband confined his contact with the village to receiving its elders in his sitting room, she often went visiting its houses and families. The village came to Abdul Aziz. Zainab went to the village. She called at the homes of the tillers, sat on their *pirhis* (primitive rustic ottomans), gossiped with the women, played with their children, prayed for the sick. Above all, she left her only baby son in their care, and made him wear clothes previously in use of the village children, and later when the baby grew to be a child he was allowed to spend hours in the peasants' houses, playing with their brats, eating their food, sometimes even sleeping in their beds.

God had made Zainab as gentle as breeze, and as sweet and freshening. Beauty was in residence in her soul. When a family was grieved and she called at it she cried with it, the film of tears hanging from her eye lids. She warmed the hearts of the women of the village with her gift of friendship. She believed in loving each moment to the full, and in the moral principle of "Do good for Good is good to do."

All this brought her as close to the hearts of the women of Ballamabad as did Abdul Aziz's love for *Hir* bring him nearer to the men of the village. Both bonds were unbreakable.

They did not break with the passing away of my mother. When I visited my birthplace 28 years after we had left it I was hailed and honoured as if the lands still belonged to my family. All who had known my mother cried when I told them of her death. When I was there again after my father's death the scene was repeated. I visit Ballamabad occasionally. The few of the old generation who survive kiss me on the forehead, some aged women on the cheeks, inquire about the family and my sisters' children, embrace my wife, and want us to come back and live in "your village." They have told their children about me and they too are courteous and affable. Every time my

wife and I leave the village our hearts are full of joy. These "strangers" and "children of strangers" restore our trust in the milk of human kindness, and uplift our hearts which have been much abused and bruised over the years by our kin of blood and others. I find these simple and sincere village folk superior in humanity to the best of the urban elite. I am glad and proud that I was born in a village.

Vive le Ballamabad!

LAHORE: 1934-1937

When Abdul Aziz arrived in Lahore in September 1934 he had no place of his own where to live. The Qutb Road bungalow had been rented out on a long lease. The Tapp Road residence was not available as Chacha Hamid was himself living in it. So the family stayed with my second sister, Razia, for a few weeks and looked for some suitable accommodation on hire. Chacha Hamid's staff helped in the search and soon a bungalow on Lawrence Road was found which offered a central location and reasonable comfort at an affordable rent.

This bungalow was situated between the Mall and Lawrence Road and was a part of the Naqi estat which consisted of about 6 houses, the only large property owned by a Muslim on or off the Mall. Our house carried the number 10A Naqi Building. A large house built on a high elevation, called "Somerset House", stood right opposite our bungalow.

Our house, situated a little off the main road opposite St. Anthony's Cathedral, had three bedrooms, separate drawing and dining rooms, a small lawn in the front, and a large courtyard at the back. The kitchen, a store, and servants' quarters lay at the far end of the courtyard. The house sufficed for our requirements.

My family's life in Lahore was very different from the Ballamabad existence in every respect. The large city offered

many attractions: reasonable transport facilities, shopping on the Mall, modern conveniences, and a school for my sister. Several close relatives lived in the city. Abdul Aziz's brother was posted in Lahore, and his youngest sister also lived here. Zainab's eldest brother did not live too far away in Mozang; and her daughter, Razia, shared the same quarter. Lahore was well connected by railway service to Jhang, Amritsar, Delhi, Peshawar, and Hoshiarpur, so that it was easy for the people living there to visit us, which they often did.

All my father's old and new friends were in Lahore. His only regret was that Sir Abdul Qadir was away in London as member of the Council of the Secretary of State for India. His closest contacts were with Mahmud Shirani, Abdullah Yusuf Ali, Sir Shihabuddin and Maulavi Muhammad Shafi. They helped him in his work on *Hir*. Shirani actually lent the services of one of his research students who looked up references, made general inquiries, assisted in collating the manuscripts, and did other odd jobs connected with *Hir*. Shihabuddin was a knowledgeable and experienced critic of Punjabi poetry, and Abdul Aziz spent several hours every week at his newly-built palatial house on Durand Road near Queen Mary's School (which later became the residence of Mian Muhammad Mumtaz Khan Daultana, Shihabuddin's nephew by marriage), consulting his *Hir* manuscripts and discussing the subject in general.

Taking advantage of the large number of colleges in the city and the Punjab University itself, my father began to contact the leading Punjabi teachers and scholars, to exchange notes with them, and to discuss the problems involved in the preparation of the text of the *Hir*. Among those who responded to his approach and request for help were Sardar Mohan Singh of the Oriental College, Milkhi Ram Gayani of the Government College, Sardar Sundar Singh of the Forman Christian College, and Pandit Jai Chand of Dyal Singh College. Sardar Sahib Singh, who taught Punjabi at Khalsa

College, Amritsar, was a frequent visitor to Lahore, and, after my father had gone to Amritsar to see him, often came to our house for long academic discussions. He had made a special study of Khwaja Ghulam Farid, Waris Shah and Mian Shah Muhammad. He passed on to my father the insights he had gained in this comparative study.

Professor A. C. Woolner, the principal of Oriental College, was a professor of Sanskrit, but he was a keen orientalist. He had only a nodding acquaintance with Punjabi (mainly its Gurmukhi version), but he was well trained in the intricacies and problems of textual criticism, and provided some useful guidance.

Abdul Aziz's second sphere of work, Mughal history, took him to a different set of scholars who could help him. This field bifurcated into the finer points of the vocabulary and etymology of the Persian language (which at times extended into the Arabic tongue) and the general approach to history.

For his difficulties in Persian he went to Maulavi Muhammad Shafi (a Cambridge-trained professor of Arabic) and Muhammad Iqbal (professor of Persian) of Oriental College; Maulavi Zafar Iqbal, who taught "education method" at the Central Training College, but had a rare mastery of the complications of Persian and Arabic vocabulary and grammar; Maulavi Muhammad Umar, who taught Persian at Islamia College, and was a former colleague of my father's; and Professor Fazl-i-Haq of the Government College. And, of course, the great Shirani, his old friend, whose scholarship was immaculate and knowledge of Persian unmatched.

Abdul Aziz was distressed to find that not a single Muslim teacher of history in the city was worth cultivating. In the first place, history of any kind was taught by Hindus (except one or two people of weak credentials and doubtful ability in Islamia College, and of whom the only properly trained man, B.A. Kureshi, was an expert in the history of

Islam and not in its rule in India). Secondly, only a few were interested in Mughal history. He could not find a single one who had specialized in his own narrow field of Mughal court institutions, or showed any interest in it. Still he joined the contemporary circle of general historians of India, which included J.F. Bruce, the professor of history at the university, and his colleague, R.R. Sethi; K.C. Khanna and G.L. Chopra of Government College; Sri Ram of D.A.V. College, and Gulshan Rai of S.D. College.

Where all these professionals, except Bruce, failed to provide any guidance, valuable help came from two outsiders. Abdullah Yusuf Ali, the principal of Islamia College (for the second time), his old friend and by now a historian in his own right, was a constant source of enlightenment, inspiration and encouragement. Though his own field was not the Mughal period, he had a mind peculiarly and sharply attuned to the historical wavelength. He taught my father many things, including the vital necessity of attending to detail (the "entrails of history" as he put it) and writing with magisterial impartiality and therefore with unassailable authority.

To a much lesser extent, but with unexpected enthusiasm and sympathy, a Hindu lawyer (soon to be made a judge of the Punjab High Court and be knighted) showed keen interest in my father's work. Bakhshi Tek Chand was a major critic of Muslim politicians in the province and had the reputation of being an enemy of the Muslims in general, be they Unionists or Muslim Leaguers. But Oxford had taught him to good purpose, and he was conscious that, far from being branded as "foreign imperialism" and dismissed as a non-part of Indian history, the Mughal period had made momentous and unforgettable contributions to the Indians' lives and culture. What pleased him even more about my father's work was that it did not plan to repeat the conventional practice of focussing

on wars and treaties, accessions and successions, conquests and sieges, betrayals and civil wars, and murders and assassinations, but to study the hitherto unexplored and fascinating institutions of the army, the mansabdari system, the jewellery, the tents, the furniture, and the library of the kings and queens of the dynasty. Woolner had introduced him to my father, and soon he became a regular visitor to our house, often spending his late afternoons on weekdays and mornings on weekends (not the Sundays, which were reserved for Abdullah Yusuf Ali), talking nineteen to the dozen and holding forth for hours on the uses of Mughal history. In between, when tea was served, he talked of his days at Oxford and compared them to my father's time in England. He and Raja Narendranath were the only two Hindus of Lahore who came so close to Abdul Aziz.

My father's wide intellectual tastes and interests could not find full satisfaction within his circle of friends and acquaintances who were scholars of Punjabi, Persian and history. He had not lost his passion for literature. Soon through accidental meetings, introductions by common friends or participation in some literary functions he came to know some prominent teachers of English literature, like Professor Ahmed Shah Bokhari ("Patras"), Professor E.C. Dickinson and Sirajuddin of Government College, M. G. Singh of Central Training College, and Bhupal Singh of Dyal Singh College. I can recall some of them calling at our house but I cannot remember how often. I have a hazy and half-forgotten memory of accompanying my father to Bokhari's flat on McLeod Road (near Laxmi Chowk), but cannot recall a single detail of the meeting.

Outside the family, my father's social life revolved round these people. The outer circle in which he moved occasionally consisted of all of them. But the inner circle was much smaller and was made up of Shirani, Sir Shihabuddin, Abdullah Yusuf Ali, Maulavi Muhammad

Shafi, J.F. Bruce, Maulavi Zafar Iqbal, Sardar Mohan Singh and Bakhshi Tek Chand.

Abdul Aziz led a very busy life throughout these three years. One half of a week was given to history and the other to *Hir*. He lectured thrice a week on history to the university's post-graduate classes. He also taught French and German in the evening at the university. Besides all this, he delivered occasional lectures at different places on Mughal history, the *Hir* and economic theory. To move about he bought a new Raleigh bicycle. Initially he had thought of going in for a small motor car but my mother vetoed the plan. She was more aware than he was of their declining income and shrinking assets.

The couple's family life was active and fulfilling. My *chacha* and *Manma* dropped in quite often and so did my married sisters. We returned the visits. There were dinners and lunches and tea parties. The second half of every Sunday was reserved for Abdullah Yusuf Ali, who treated himself as a member of the family. Regular guests from other towns were *Mami* Bali and her two daughters from Jhang and my eldest sister, Akhtar, from Delhi. Chacha Hakim had not yet moved to Lahore but came from Peshawar quite frequently and stayed with us.

Till now my father's (or rather my mother's, because she was the legal owner of all properties except the haveli in Batala, which was jointly owned by Abdul Aziz and Hamid) financial state of health was satisfactory. But he was no longer a wealthy man. In the prevailing recession he had not been able to get a good price for the Ballamabad lands. He had spent nearly fifty thousand rupees on buying the *Hir* manuscripts. Besides the everyday domestic expenses, there were other regular outgoings like the salaries of typists and research assistants, purchase of books locally and from abroad (the latter on French and German literature, dictionaries, encyclopaedias, and on his

new interest in fine arts), monthly allowances to all the surviving sisters and some other relatives, the upkeep of Fazl Bibi, the widow of Azizuddin, pensions to a number of retainers, and monetary assistance to a dozen families who had migrated from Kahnuwan to Batala with Zuhra in 1876 out of loyalty and love for Waziruddin's family.

Abdul Aziz and Zainab were used to spend freely. The house was often full of guests. Zainab had inherited open-handed hospitality from Nur and Zuhra. Both of my married sisters required regular help because their husbands had low-paid jobs. The upkeep of the Batala haveli had its own demands. My father was fond of dressing well; and buying English-made suits, jackets, trousers, shirts, silk ties and shoes of high quality from establishments like Rankens and Balmoody cost a great deal. So did his hobby of riding well-bred horses. He had still not forgotten his Café Royal days in London or the dinners at the University Arms of Cambridge. In Lahore he regularly invited his friends to afternoon teas at the Lorang's and lunches and dinners at the Stiffle's, the two most expensive restaurants in town. Then he was used to having a large number of domestic servants, numbering from six to a dozen.

Life lived on this level was expensive. My mother once told me that in those days she used to spend between two and three thousand rupees a month, which was princely considering that these were recession days and things were cheap or at least inexpensive.

Now what about his income? Out of what he had received from the sale of the Ballamabad land he had bought a large portion of land near Chauburji, which was not bringing in anything. He had also invested several thousand rupees in a few commercial companies, but the dividends were low, again because of the recession. The remainder he had deposited in the banks. But in those days the banks paid a small interest on all deposits. There were

no state savings schemes from which interest or profit accrued at the rate of 12-15% a year (alas! now even that has dwindled to an actual 6%). Rents of houses were low, and the Qutb Road 8-bedroom bungalow spread over ten kanals brought in a mere Rs. 150 a month.

There were future obligations which could not be shirked. The youngest sister had to be married off and the occasion must be of respectable dignity, even if not on the prodigal scale of the previous weddings in Batala. Then my father had high ambitions about my education: good private tutors, then Aitchison Chief's College, followed by Government College, and ending up at Oxford and Cambridge. Lordly dreams. Waning fortunes. The opposites never meet; certainly not in the world of Mammon.

When my parents sat down and did some accounting the final tally was grim and dismal. The first realization of coming down in the world is always painful. The height from which you fall measures the intensity of the hurt. Peremptory damage control measures were called for. One immediate and ameliorative solution was found. They must move to Batala without delay.

Going home should remove many unnecessary expenses and cut down some necessary ones. The order of the day was issued: live in your own house, get rid of most of the servants, buy only those books which are urgently required, type your books and articles yourself, etc, etc.

The list of don'ts was long. This should not give the reader the impression that the family coffers were empty. It could still live in comfort on half the earlier budget. But the long, hard, bumpy travel to penury had begun.

The bungalow was vacated. Some servants were dismissed, some pensioned off, only three retained, most of the furniture bought in 1934 was sold; the haveli in Batala had everything they would require and to spare. But one step my father and mother refused to take: the expenses incurred

in looking after Fazl Bibi, the pensions to the old retainers or their children, and the allowances to the married daughters would be neither discontinued nor reduced.

With an iron determination to live within their estimated income Abdul Aziz and Zainab moved with their daughter and son to Batala in October 1937.

BATALA: 1937-1942

For the next five years the family lived in Batala. My father's research on history and collation of the *Hir* manuscripts continued side by side. He visited Lahore every month for a week or so to return and borrow library books, consult those which could not be issued out, and meet his friends. He stayed with his daughter, and if my school was closed I accompanied him. The old routine of allotting three days of the week to each of his two fields of research was resumed. He went for a long walk after the afternoon tea, and on his way to or back he dropped in on some of his relatives and friends.

He had only three close friends in the town, one Hindu and two Muslims. The Hindu gentleman was Mr. Bhandari, the scion of an ancient and highly respected family which had held important local offices under the Mughals. He was well read in Oriental and Western literature and knew very good Persian. He was interested in history, and two large rooms of his haveli contained unique archival material relating to his family and the history of medieval Batala. In 1975 the Indian Sikh historian J. S. Grewal, of Guru Nanak University of Amritsar, used this source to write his *In the By-Lanes of History: Some Persian Documents from a Punjab Town*, which is a study of Batala. He was a broad-minded cultured Hindu who ate freely at his Muslim friends' houses; but he abstained from meat. His way of talking was to utter every word slowly but gently, as if with

stepping-stone deliberation. His Punjabi was very Persainized and Arabicized, and he frequently quoted from classical Persian poets, specially Hafiz. My father used to refer to him as "my Hindu Sufi friend".

Among the Muslims one was Mr. Muhammad Jamil, who was so close to our family that my sister and I always addressed him as *chachaji*. He had retired a few years earlier as a jail superintendent and built or rebuilt his house in a narrow lane, next to Abdul Majid Salik's ancestral residence. He had a beard with more grey hair than black, and a face which shone with an inner light. He always dressed in *kurta* and *salwar* with a white turban. He suffered from a slight strutter. He was a confirmed Sufi by conviction and profession, but was very strict in the performance of all religious rituals, to the extent that for years he had never missed his *i'tikaf* in the last ten days of Ramazan. As one should have expected, he was in love with Persian poetry, which he had read extensively and with much care and attention to its symbolic undercurrents. His conversation was always ornamented with apposite Persian and Punjabi couplets or single lines . After 1947 he fled to Lahore and lived in Krishan Nagar where he died on 4 December 1955 at about 4.00 P.M.

The other Muslim friend was a remarkable man with a fascinating and most unusual life story. Khurshid Ahmad, for that was his name, belonged to an old wealthy family of the town. His father Mukhtar Ahmad, along with his brother, had been called to the bar in the nineteenth century; probably the first two Punjabis to qualify as barristers. Khurshid lived in a small palace inside Hathi Gate as a gentleman of private means. Nature had blessed him with all that a young man prays for. He was extremely handsome with finely-cut features, fair and clear complexion, tall stature (6 feet and 2 inches), broad chest and shapely hands. A smile was always lurking behind his

bright eyes, just waiting to be summoned. He dressed well, had a gourmet's taste in food, and owned some fine pieces of English china. On account of his good breeding, well-favoured looks, manly English tastes and manners, and above all his long years spent in Europe, everyone in the town called him "Saab" (Sahib); I will do the same.

Saab was about ten years junior to my father. After passing out of the Municipal Board High School he was sent to England by his father at the age of twenty to read for the bar. He stayed there for fifteen years. In that long sojourn lies a sad story of great love and lamentable tragedy.

Soon after his arrival in London he met a young girl who was the daughter of an old Anglo-Italian aristocratic family. The English father must have been well born enough to marry into a ducal family of Italy, as she bore the title of Countess. It was a matter of love at first sight, certainly on the part of the girl. She was infatuated with him, from the moment of their first encounter to the end of the tale. He gave up his legal studies and for the next fifteen years lived on the girl's love, money, aristocratic whims, and romantic fancies. She took him on a whirlwind tour of Europe which ended in Italy where she introduced him to her mother's family. After that they lived a lordly life, spending their winters in London, their springs in Paris and south of France, their summers in Switzerland, and their autumns in Italy and Greece. In between these regal perambulations she took him to every capital city on the Continent. They stayed in the most expensive hotels or beautiful villas and apartments, were waited upon by faultlessly trained servants, lunched and dined at the most posh restaurants, danced in exclusive ballrooms, visited Belgian and German spas, sailed on the sea, skied on the mountain slopes, and moved in high society and met the cream of blue-blooded Europe.

At first Saab looked at all this with wide-eyed wonder, pinching himself to confirm that all this was not a sweet,

transient dream. When he found that it was not, he succumbed to it, yielding to the will of the Contessa, going where she wanted him to go, enjoying every minute of the romance, wallowing in the luxury which came free and unstinted, drinking the good life to its lees. He learnt how to exist on the level of a gentleman of high refinement (his own family background helped), to quaff the best wines of Europe and to recognize their quality from their bouquet, to dance every fashionable step with elegant and practised ease, to dine with dukes and earls and give the impression that he had been doing it since his coming of age (which, in a way, was the real truth), to consort with the *crème de la crème* of many lands with confidence, to miss no divertissement or revel which came his way, to ride and hunt with their lordships, to order the servants around with well-bred haughtiness – in short, to walk the earth on the uplands inhabited by the European nobility without giving cause for the slightest suspicion that he was an interloper. From his looks and bearings some of the Contessa's friends took him to be an Ottoman princeling.

Every dream must end. The Saab-Contessa rapture ended when all of a sudden Saab decided to return to India. I don't know whether it was an attack of nostalgia or his satiety with Western life or with the woman on whom he had cast a spell. He must have told the true reason to my father, for no two men could be closer than they were, but I was too young to be let into the secret. What I know is that at some time in the early 1930s Saab left the woman saying he would be back, and never went back. He received many letters from her, but I don't know if he answered them, and if he did what was his explanation for his failure or inability to go back to Europe. I think he did write back to her (and introduced my father to her in his letters, calling him his best friend and confidant), because when she stopped receiving his letters she, in her despair, began to write to my father, starting with brief inquiries about Saab and then expanding into long

descriptions of her life with him and passionate professions of her love for him. She begged my father to persuade Saab to return to her. I don't know what my father wrote back to her, but he preserved all her letters and a photograph of hers which she had sent to him.

Saab did not live long after this. He died suddenly of a heart failure in 1940 or 1941, and for the first time I saw my father crying like a child.

My father used to say that he had never met an Indian as cultured as Saab was. Among other proofs of this claim he quoted (and repeated it several times before me and others) an incident which was an eloquent tribute to Saab's refined manners. One day my father visited him in the afternoon and was offered tea. The servant brought in the paraphernalia and left. Saab was pouring tea into my father's cup when he accidentally over-tilted the teapot and let one drop of liquid land in the saucer. He immediately called for the servant and asked him to replace the cup and saucer. My father pointed out that one single drop could easily be wiped off and that another saucer was not needed. His reply was that he could not bear to see that drop where it should not have been. It would spoil *his* enjoyment of tea. This was the extent of his sense of decorum and fastidious decency.

Among my father's Indian friends Saab was the first before whom my mother appeared without purda. He called my father *Bhai sahib* and my mother *Bhabi*.

Saab had an unhappy and painful family life. His first marriage to a woman of a thoroughly boorish family of Batala lasted a few months. After divorcing her he married a young woman called Badshah Begum, who was good-looking, smart and petite. They had two young sons when Saab died. Very soon after this Badshah Begum was forced to move out of Saab's haveli and live in a small modest house in the same street not more than a hundred yards away. The perpetrator of this cruelty was Saab's only sister,

ironically also called Khurshid Begum, who was as ugly in looks as in heart. Consumed with jealousy of Badshah Begum, wanting to be the sole owner of the haveli, and foul of tongue, she drove out her sister-in-law. Not content with this, the gorgon stopped all her relatives, of whom there were many, even to visit Badshah Begum. The widow, once the wife of a wealthy man who did not count what he spent, was supported by her two brothers. My father and mother were the only regular and frequent visitors of Badshah's. She was a remarkably brave woman. A widow in her late twenties, driven out of her husband's house, denied any share of her husband's riches, boycotted by her in-laws she took all misfortunes in her stride and smiled away all her worries. She always received my parents as if life was normal. But all of us knew how excruciating was the hurt inside her. In 1947 she went away to live with her brothers in Bahawalpur and we lost touch with her. One of her sons, probably the older, was called Khizr. I cannot recall the younger's name.

One day a fakir came to our haveli and claimed that he recited *Hir* so well that his voice brought the dead to life. His performance was good, but not that good. Anyway he was given a room on the ground floor where he made himself comfortable. He stayed with us for about two months, reciting the epic an hour or two every day. Then he began to have delusions of grandeur. He thought he was indispensable. He demanded better food, then more money, and finally a whole-time servant to wait upon him. That was the end of his stay in our house. He was given some money and his *congé*.

Another family worthy of note was Shaikh Ghulam Akbar's, who was a retired police official but widely read in history and oriental literature, particularly Persian poetry. His greatest achievement was his children: six sons and three daughters. All of them had a taste for poetry and interesting conversation. They talked with piquancy and a

charming abandon, freely quoting Persian and Urdu classics. Three of the sons made a mark in life and are worth a brief mention.

Dr. Ashiq Husain Batalavi drank from many literary wells. He was a contemporary historian, a man of letters, a short story writer, an essayist, and the editor of the best Urdu literary journals of his time. His Urdu prose was stimulating, vigorous, enchanting, light and facile. For some reason that I don't know he left Pakistan in the 1950s, settled in London, worked for some time in the Urdu Service of the British Broadcasting Corporation and wrote several books. He died in London in straitened circumstances. An early marriage with a beautiful woman of much literary taste, Imtiaz, had lasted but a short while. He had no interest in the opposite sex and he should not have married. All his life he lived by himself and died in loneliness. His only defect known to me was that he talked too much, which detracted from the generally sparkling quality of the conversation.

Agha Babur, whose real name was Sajjad Husain, was even a better Urdu prose writer than his older brother. He too was a many-sided man. He served in the public relations department of the army, wrote short stories, ran the arts council of Rawalpindi, staged plays, and died in New York before completing his masterpiece: memoirs of his life. His style is scintillating, breathing life into ordinary everyday words, making pedestrian anecdotes embroider the story, endowing short glittering sentences with unbelievable emphasis and power.

The youngest brother was Ejaz Batalavi. He was one of the ablest lawyers in the country, author of a few haunting poems in Urdu, and a man of letters. He had studied widely, but unfortunately not written any sustained work which might make a mark in literature.

One family which was related to us by marriage was that of Khan Bahadur Dr. Muhammad Sharif, a retired civil

surgeon, who had built or renovated a large house inside Kapuri Gate. He had married thrice. His second wife was a daughter of Abdul Aziz's sister Fatima, and from her he had two sons. The older, Najmuddin Yusuf, was educated at Cambridge where he was a contemporary and friend of Chaudhri Rahmat Ali, and taught at the University of Agriculture in Lyallpur from where he retired as vice-chancellor. He was an exceptionally handsome man, as were all the children borne by Fatima and her daughter, a chain smoker, a lover of books, and rollicking good company. His younger brother, Nuruddin Latif, failed to do well in studies and was sent to London to learn the art of designing and cutting male dresses. On his return in the late 1930s he opened a shop in New Delhi's fashionable and famous Connaught Place. But a defect in speech (heavy stammer) and bad luck led to the failure of his business. After 1947 he could just manage to obtain a low-paid job in the Punjab electricity department, and later died in virtual poverty.

Among the casual friends and formal callers were members of the ancient and venerable religious family of the Mians of Mian Mohalla: Badar Muhayyuddin, Nazar Muhayyuddin and Khurshid Muhayyuddin. The last-mentioned had been my father's student at Islamia College and now a friend. He got some land allotted to himself in the well-publicized "Graduates' village": a novel experiment of making farmers out of educated Puñjabis. Mian Nazar's son, Najm Husain Syed, is in the tradition, now extremely rare, of the British administrator-scholar, and after retirement as Accountant General of the Punjab has done enough to be ranked as one of the most prominent Punjabi scholars of his time. All men and women of this family were known for their good looks. Two of the girls, Saara and Paara, were approximately of my age and schoolfellows of my sister Kishwar. I still remember their dazzling beauty after 67 years though I never saw them after their school days.

This was the social and familial circles in which my father and mother moved in Batala. Long-staying relatives did not stop coming. The family still bore a high name. The haveli was big enough to sleep fifty persons, but the decline in its master's fortunes was not yet public news.

In 1939 Fazl Bibi, Azizuddin's widow, breathed her last. Many years ago Azizuddin, realizing that his end was not far away and aware of the difference between his and his second wife's ages, had begged Ghulam Nabi to look after her when he was gone. Ghulam Nabi had given his promise to do so. But he himself was an old man, and he had asked Abdul Aziz to make Fazl Bibi's life comfortable as long as she lived. The order had been obeyed. After Azizuddin's death his sons claimed the ownership of the house where he and Fazl Bibi had lived, and my father had bought a small independent 2-storeyed house for Fazl Bibi inside Thathiari Gate, shifted her there and appointed a middle-aged married couple to take care of her.

Fazl Bibi's death brought to an end a long and romantic saga in our family annals. She had entered the family nearly sixty years ago and experienced changing fortunes. She had been wooed and won by a middle-aged Waziruddin, boycotted by his brothers and mother, then gradually brought back into the family fold, invited to the big haveli and, when Sharfo had left to live with his younger son, developed warm relations with Zuhra, Nur and Ghulam Nabi. She must have been pleased that her love had at the end triumphed. She died happy. My parents buried her in the family graveyard next to her husband. The two sleep together in mother earth. Love conquers all, even time.

In the spring of 1941, in the tradition established by Ghulam Nabi in the nineteenth century, three weddings took place on three successive days with much pomp and show at the Tapp Road residence of Chacha Hamid. Ghulam Muhammad's youngest daughter, Fahmida, was married to

Fazl-i-Elahi Khan, her cousin on her mother's side, and an engineer by profession; Ghulam Muhammad's second son, Ghulam Ahmad Gul (later a famous film producer), wedded Bilquis; and Chacha Hamid's eldest daughter, also named Bilquis, was married to Muhammad Bashir Khan Malik of the Indian State Railways who belonged to Kunjah near Gujrat and was a Kakkezai but from outside the family.

This was the last mammoth gathering of the clan and was thoroughly enjoyed by every one. About two hundred adults and their children were accommodated in the bungalow and a number of neighbouring houses. The festivities lasted for ten days. A few years later the cataclysm of partition scattered the family and destroyed old contacts. The social change tolled the knell of venerable traditions and values. The clan as a unit ruled by love, moral sensibility, mutual regard, natural affection, tender sentiment and shared history ceased to exist, and was replaced by a congeries of families who lived their own separate lives, concentrated on material advancement, threw their common history into oblivion, and did not meet together even on weddings and funerals. The scourge of modernity had killed humanity. Amnesia had succeeded money. Now all is blankness, and man qua man has no value.

The work on *Hir's* text marched on at a satisfactory pace. By now all scholars of Punjabi knew what my father was attempting, and a stream of learned men flowed to Batala from Amritsar, Lahore and Patiala. Most of the visitors were Sikhs, and discussions with them on the language were useful, at times enlightening. Their concerted efforts persuaded my father to start learning a new language in his mid-fifties, Gurmukhi. Of this more later.

One of the most difficult tasks faced in the preparation of a true text in any language is the variorum study of the vocabulary used. Most words are pregnant with layers of meanings, extended connotations, spirit, tenor, import,

purport, force, implication, scope, expression, extended semantics, wealth of significances, emphases, shapes, nuances, the variety of usages, and the changes occurring in their use as time passes. One of the criteria for judging the correct or incorrect use of a word in one manuscript and the other was its currency at the time when Waris Shah was composing his masterpiece. In order to accept or reject a word (and on that account to include or exclude a line or a couplet, and in some cases a whole passage) it was necessary to know the different ways (or the single way) in which it could have been used in Waris Shah's time, roughly mid-eighteenth century. It was impossible to consult the poet's contemporaries after the passage of nearly 200 years. Nor was any historical dictionary of the language in existence. Punjabi shares with all languages written in the Arabic-Persian script one characteristic which renders collation even more difficult: the use of the dot. The number of dots over and under a letter makes a different word with an entirely different meaning. Some manuscripts were in such a bad shape (because of crumbling paper, use of a bad pen, the drying up of the ink, an error by the scribe) that it was hard to say whether the letter was intended to be a *bé* or a *pé*, or a *jim* or a *ché*. The common slash (resembling the accent mark in Latin languages, but longer) could be a *kaf* or a *gaf*. In the case of most words so added, anyone who knew Punjabi well could (in most cases correctly) guess what the real word was and where the calligrapher had gone wrong or the forces of nature (high humidity, extreme dryness, the gnawing by an insect) had distorted the text. But there were some strange words with which the living generation was not familiar, e.g., names of domestic appliances, utensils, tools, agricultural implements, fruits and vegetables, trees and plants, folk medicines, clothes, varieties of cloth, etc. How does one identify them and then ponder over which one was

what Waris Shah would in all probability have used or intended or meant?

There was only one way to get around the problem. Find the oldest persons alive and available and in their senses and use them as a dictionary. As most of the words in question related to domestic life it was reasonable to think that women would be better equipped to answer inquiries. My father began to search for all women who were in their eighties and not senile. Wherever such a *rara avis* was located my father approached her with his incomplete glossary and the interrogation started.

At this time the oldest woman alive in our family who was in her perfect senses and had a good memory was my mother's mother's sister, *masi* or *bébé* Barkat, or *maanji* as we called her. She was *Manma* Majid's mother-in-law and lived half the year with us and half with her eldest sister in Amritsar. She had been born in a village near Batala, grown up there, and spent all her married life in a nearby village, and moved to Batala-Amritsar only after her widowhood. She was very helpful and solved many mysteries of Waris Shah's vocabulary. She asked my father, whom she always called *putar* (Punjabi for son), to prepare a final list of all the words which were still an enigma to him and come with the list to a village between Batala and Amritsar where she knew a remote cousin who might be of further help. So one fine day the sprightly old lady (bent double with age), my father, Rabia (my cousin, playmate and beloved friend, and the youngest daughter of Masi Barkat's eldest daughter; and incidentally the loveliest girl I have seen in my entire life) and I hired the most comfortable tonga we could find and visited the said village. The woman whom we had gone to see claimed to be a little over a hundred and did spell out the connotations of about a score of words whose meaning and context had eluded my father. My father was very happy on the return journey and said, "*Masiji*, to me you are not less

than *Hir*" (she was an exceptionally beautiful woman even at her advanced age). To which she replied laughingly, while placing her hand on Rabia's head, "*Putra, jé Hir wékheni ain na té ais kurhi nun wékh. Hir éthon sohni nayn honi*" (Son, if you want to see Hir look at this girl. Hir couldn't have been more beautiful than she is). Of this little Hir I shall have to say a great deal in my autobiography.

In 1940 or 1941 my father received the offer of the principalship of the Anglo-Arabic College, Delhi. It came about like this. When my father was arranging the printing of his first book on Mughal history he needed a permit from the Government of India to purchase paper; which was then rationed because of the War. For this he wrote to Sir Muhammad Azizul Haq who was at this time the Commerce Member of the Viceroy's Executive Council. He expected a routine reply saying yes or no signed by a superintendent or at the most by an Assistant Secretary in the Department. To his surprise he got a long friendly letter from Azizul Haq himself, saying he had read my father's articles on Shahjahan and liked them. He enclosed the permit which had been requested. Soon afterwards the principalship of the Anglo-Arabic College fell vacant. Azizul Haq, a Bengali politician and educationist, was a man of influence in Delhi and probably had some connection, official or informal, with the Managing Committee which ran the college. He suggested my father's name for the principalship. Hence the unexpected offer.

My father declined the offer and wrote a letter of warm thanks to Azizul Haq, explaining the reasons for his refusal. He understood my father's point of view. My mother did not. She took the stand that for some time now the budget of the house was teetering on the brink of deficit, expenditure outran the income, and an offer promising an improvement in the financial situation should be accepted. Such an opportunity might not come his way again. She

was right. The commercial shares acquired in 1934 were being sold off packet by packet. Even this did not suffice to meet the demands, and now plans were afoot to dispose of a part or the whole of the land on Multan Road in Lahore.

In reply my father argued from purely academic premises. The principalship of a college was a full-time job. Not only that, but his duties would also intrude on his free evenings. All kinds of problems arose in such institutions, and teachers and students and delegations and managing committee members would expect him to receive them at all odd hours. This would play havoc with his historical research and his work on *Hir*. Besides, one experience of teaching at a private college had been enough of a lesson. He was not prepared to let himself be bitten twice. He pointed out what had happened to Abdullah Yusuf Ali so recently at Islamia College. If a man of his stature and administrative experience could be humiliated by his employers he himself would be dangerously vulnerable in a city where nobody knew him and he knew nobody except Azizul Haq; and Azizul Haq was not going to be there forever; he would return to Bengal when his term at the Viceroy's Council came to its end. In any case, he concluded, he just could not give up his research work, no matter how attractive the prospect for a good income.

My mother remembered the pledge she had given twenty years ago: never to stand in the way of his literary ambitions. It was useless to remonstrate with a man so passionately devoted to his ideals. She could not bite into granite. She surrendered. More property was sold.

LAHORE: 1942-1947

In May 1942 I matriculated from the Batala school and joined the Forman Christian College of Lahore. My mother could not bear the thought of my living in the college hostel away from her, and the family moved back to Lahore. But

this change of residence was made on the firm but unspoken assumption that our stay in Lahore would be a kind of a posting for as long as I was studying, and that we would be spending all my vacations, breaks and holiday spells in Batala. How blithely man proposes . . . !

Unable to afford to live in the fashionable quarters of Davis, Empress, Jail, Queens and other such roads, Abdul Aziz rented one half of a bungalow at the far end of Poonch Road; beyond it lay fields and in the distance a village. The Qutb Road house had been rented out on a long lease to a Hindu lawyer, and the wartime rent laws made it difficult to get it vacated or to increase the rent. The family lived on Poonch Road for only a few months. The house was burgled one night and the loss included some gold ornaments made to order by my mother for my sister's marriage and several other valuables. We shifted to a house in a congested *mohalla* on Poonch Road, then to Model Town, and then to a number of other places. As my father's financial situation worsened so did the quality, size and location of the residence. The haveli in Batala could not be rented out as it was crowded with furniture and other household effects. Besides, we spent all our holidays there.

There were some unavoidable expenses which burdened the already small income. The expenditure on my college education, new English dresses and transport had to be met. Living in Lahore cost more than living in Batala. Utility bills had to be paid. My father was too old to bicycle around the city and often he had to carry the library books; he began to use a tonga and that added to the outgoings. To meet the deficit all the plots of land on Multan Road were disposed of. The sale proceeds lasted but a few years, and in 1946, much against my mother's will, the Qutb Road bungalow was sold for Rs. 70,000.

My father was engaged in his research on history and *Hir* and had little time to spare. But necessity forced him to take

up two jobs. He became a part- time lecturer at the department of history at the university. He lectured on Mughal history three days a week and was paid ten rupees per lecture.

He also taught French and German on four evenings at the university. I don't know how much he was paid for this work; but all these emoluments stopped during the vacations and other holidays. Wheat, rice, maize and ghee were supplied by the one square of agricultural land we had in Batala. Life was becoming uncomfortable, but not precarious; not yet.

In these five years my father lost several close relatives. On 9 October 1942 his youngest sister, Sultan, died in Lahore. She was married to Muhammad Ali who worked in the income tax department. Tall, slim, well dressed, fair of complexion and fond of good things of life (a picture of Nur, they used to say), she had spent a happy life. She laughed a lot and inspired the people around her to follow her.

Within a year my father lost his only brother, Hamid, who died of a sudden heart attack in Lahore on 13 September 1943. He had been transferred a few months earlier from the deputy commissionership of Montgomery (Sahiwal) to the job of the Chief Executive Officer of the Lahore Corporation, the first Indian to get this appointment. I saw my father cry for the second time; the first had been on the death of his friend Saab.

Chacha Hamid was a man of many parts, and his personality had many dimensions, most of them attractive. He was a true grandson of Waziruddin and son of Ghulam Nabi, summing in himself their habits and outlooks. In physique he resembled Waziruddin and Ghulam Muhammad more than Ghulam Nabi and Abdul Aziz. He was over six feet tall with a sportsman's broad chest, long arms and a strong face. He was a good tennis player and horse rider. In temperament he followed his grandfather and uncle Ghulam Muhammad rather than his own father. He was quick to laugh, to tell and

enjoy a joke, to appreciate beauty in women, and to gather people around him to have fun.

He inherited the family's flair for hospitality. He used to say that the more the people at his table the more he enjoyed his food and the better he digested it. All his life he held largely attended parties without waiting for any special occasion. He would ask all his relatives and their children to spend a Sunday or a holiday at his house and fed them generously on the best that his cook(s) could prepare. He would repeat this with his friends and colleagues. These social gatherings became such a common practice that on the rare occasion when no invitation arrived people started making inquiries about his health and well-being. He was a perfect host, going around the tables and asking every guest if he or she was being properly looked after and was eating to his or her fill. His taste in cuisine was faultless. He did not cook himself, but knew the finer points of the preparation of many dishes, the proportion of their ingredients, the quality of their basic components, the amount of spices to be used, and so on. It is said that he had learnt most of it from his first wife and the cooks trained by her. His second wife did not cook. His parties were welcome to all gourmets and gourmands.

He enjoyed good conversation and was an adroit talker, neither monopolizing the conversation nor taking refuge in grim silence. He had an attractive way of pronouncing words and a gift for adding emphasis or stress to them with a smile or a characteristic movement of eyes. He was excellent company whether the audience was a group of family members or a gathering of friends.

His enjoyment of life touched all its aspects. He was the first from our family to spend his honeymoon in London in 1932. He was the first to wear western dress with elegance and good taste; Hakim Jan came second, and my father a third. His suits were well cut, his collars stiff and shapely,

his neckties of woven silk which knotted well, and his shoes of the highest quality. His collection of cuff links was legendary. He had a dozen felt hats, and he tried to match their colour with the shade of the suit he was wearing. In summer, on informal occasions, he always wore a white or cream coloured silk shirt, trousers of white soft merserized cotton (*makhan zeen*), black socks and black shoes. At home he was clad in white pyjamas and white fine muslin *kurta*.

He never drank alcohol or wine of any kind. But he was a chain-smoker. Except at the dining table one never saw him without his round tin of Black and White Marcovitch cigarettes (probably the most expensive in the world) and his box of matches. That is what killed him at the end, at a relatively early age.

After graduating from Aligarh he had taken his M.A. degree in English from Government College, Lahore, taught English at Islamia College, Lahore, for a year, and then entered the Punjab Civil Service through open competition. He must have been an able officer because in about twenty years he rose to be a deputy commissioner, and at the time of his death he was the first Indian Chief Executive Officer of the Lahore Corporation.

Several factors induced him to live on a level above his rank in service: family background, money, desire to enjoy life to the full, and his swift promotions. From the very beginning in the service his lifestyle was that of an ICS officer. He ran a big motor car, employed many servants, joined exclusive clubs and entertained lavishly.

In spite of living like a senior British officer and leading a fashionable life he was a practising Muslim of uncompromising strictness. Since his Aligarh days he had fasted during Ramazan with canonical regularity and said the five daily prayers scrupulously. Regardless of what he was doing and the nature of the occasion he was attending, he would quietly slip away to another room to say his prayers.

Once the Governor of the Punjab, Sir Bertrand James Glancy, was on an official visit to Montgomery when Hamid was the deputy commissioner, and the city fathers had given an evening party in His Excellency's honour. There were only two persons on the dais, the governor and the deputy commissioner. The Governor rose to make his speech. After two minutes the call to evening prayer sounded from a nearby mosque. Hamid got up from his chair, climbed down the dais, and walked away. The Governor saw him leaving, stopped speaking in mid-sentence, and then resumed his speech. As His Excellency explained later, he prolonged his speech to enable the deputy commissioner to return while he was still speaking, to avoid an awkward situation and to stop people talking about it. After ten minutes Hamid returned and resumed his seat. The Governor did not make any reference to his temporary absence.

The function ended in the normal way, the audience went home, and the governor drove to the deputy commissioner's house where he was to dine. The only other guests were the British superintendent of police and the Sikh civil surgeon. In the middle of the meal the civil surgeon said to the Governor, "Your Excellency, your comments on the health problems of the district were very pertinent", and then turning to Hamid added, "But you did not hear them. You had gone away. Where did you go?" The deputy commissioner said calmly, "I went to say my evening prayers. You knew what hour it was, didn't you?" Then he turned to the Governor to ay something, perhaps to explain his absence, but before he could open his mouth the Governor said, "Mr. Deputy Commissioner, I have been in India for 35 years. I know that Muslims – well, all the good ones – pray. I also know that the sunset prayer is the only one of the five daily rituals which has to be said on time. I thought the civil surgeon knew his country. I also know my deputy commissioners. When you left the platform I knew where you were going and for what purpose."

By making these remarks the British governor upheld the reputation of his service and showed the quality of his character. There lay the secret of the success of British imperial rule in India. I wonder if, given the same situation six years later, a Pakistani governor – possessing twenty times less competence and one hundred times less dignity and tact, but five hundred times more arrogance – would have made the comments that Glancy made. I wonder even more if a district officer in the Islamic Republic of Pakistan would dare leave the visiting governor alone at a public function and go away to say his prayers. How times and values and men change!

With this strict practice of his religion went two other very human virtues: sympathy and humility. He had an extraordinary sense of loyalty to the family. Apart from giving financial help to his sisters and other relatives, he looked after their children and got them jobs in the government. But this humaneness and compassion extended to others too. If a domestic servant or a lowly functionary in his office fell seriously sick he would pass over his status and visit him, fetch a doctor and spend hours with him, solacing him and his family.

Of his humility only one example will suffice. When posted in Lahore he would always say his Friday congregational prayers at the mosque in Nila Gumbad. It happened twice that he reached the mosque a few minutes late and, instead of trying to make his way inside and find a place in one of the front rows, he took off his shoes, swept away the shoes of other people left outside the mosque, cleared a space for himself on the footpath and prayed there, with his head touching shoes when in the prostrating posture. When the prayer was over and those who had finished the obligatory part of the prayer (*farz*) came out of the mosque they were astonished to see the Chief Executive Officer praying amid the shoes.

Exactly the same thing had happened twice earlier in Montgomery, and the common people, for whom in those days the deputy commissioner was only one step lower than God, took him to their heart. Such was his popularity after this that the people of the town collected money to build a boys' school and named it after his wife. I understand that the Farrukh High School for Boys still exists in the town.

Since 1947 I have seen with my own eyes, heard about from others, watched on the television and seen photographs in newspapers, a different "Islamic" phenomenon. In the city's principal mosque on the Eid day the front row is reserved for the elite and the space just behind the *imam* (prayer-leader) for the rulers of the day. And the prayer ritual does not start until the rulers have arrived and occupied their august places. The same priority is granted to them even at the funeral prayers. Spiritual arrogance can go no further; nor such blatant rejection of the basic teaching of Islam, viz., equality and brotherhood of the believers.

When Abdul Hamid's cortege wended its way on foot from Chamba House Lane off the Golf Road to the Miani Sahib graveyard on Bahawalpur Road, a distance of about 3 miles, it was followed by 20,000 people, most of them common folk, headed by the British governor, the same Glancy who had acted so tactfully in Montgomery. Some of his friends had called Hamid a "prince among men and a man among princes". How apt! He had lived a full life, happy and radiant. When it was extinguished he was mourned much by many.

On 19 May 1946 the youngest and the last surviving son of Waziruddin, Ghulam Muhammad, died in Peshawar. The final link with the old generation snapped with his death. He had spent a good and long life, first in Amritsar, then in Kabul, and finally in graceful retirement in Peshawar. He had been very different from Ghulam Nabi in temperament and outlook on life. He laughed, joked, played games, gossiped, talked well, made friends easily,

was generous with his money, and treated everyone with affection. Conscious of the grave risk Ghulam Muhammad had run in helping Nadir Khan to conquer Afghanistan in 1929, King Zahir Shah came incognito to Peshawar to condole with the family; he was accompanied by Shah Wali and Shah Mahmud. The last son of the soil of Kahnuwan was buried in Peshawar. I saw my father cry the third time. They were deeply attached to each other.

Another old man left the world in January 1947. Azizuddin's and Sharfo's older son, Muhammad Husain, who was married to Abdul Aziz's elder sister, Barkat, died in our Batala haveli at 3.00 A.M. on 21 January 1947. He was buried there; and my father brought Barkat with him to Lahore. Muhammad Husain was the last of the family to die in Batala. Seven months later Batala itself died for the family. On 11 April Khurshid, Ghulam Muhammad's second daughter, died on the operation table in a Lahore hospital.

The sickle of time was at work, gathering in its grisly harvest of death and decimating Waziruddin's progeny.

Abdul Aziz's research work continued at its customary speed. The *Hir* text was turning out well. Years of work on Mughal history were producing results. He published his first book, on the imperial treasury, in 1942; the second, on the mansabdari system, in 1945; and the third, on arms and jewellery, in 1947.

His life in Lahore was extremely busy. He was growing old but was in excellent health. Hard work did not tire him. Financial worry did not interfere with his mental concentration. His social life was confined to meetings with his friends and cousins. Among the latter he spent most of his free time with Hakim Jan. Of his friends, Hafiz Mahmud Shirani was gone to Tonk, Sir Abdul Qadir was not in Lahore, and Abdullah Yusuf Ali was in London. He occasionally saw Maulavi Shafi of Oriental College. Sirajuddin Azar dropped in whenever he was in town.

During these years his relationship with Sir Shihabuddin flowered into close friendship. Both shared a passion for Punjabi poetry and good books of all kinds. Shihabuddin possessed some of the best and most authentic manuscripts of *Hir*, and my father spent many hours in consulting them with Shihabuddin's help. He also persuaded him to sell a part of his magnificent private collection of books to the Punjab University Library. The Chaudhri died in 1949 and my father felt sick at heart.

By now my father's interest in fine arts had grown into a passion, and this brought him closer to E. C. Dickinson of Government College, who was a well-informed critic of art and the proud owner of a respectable collection of paintings and other *objets d'art*. On his invitation my father delivered a series of lectures on European painting and Greek sculpture at the Government College. This brought him in touch with Fabri, the curator of the Lahore Museum, on whose suggestion he also lectured occasionally at the Museum and the Mayo School of Arts.

FROWNS OF FORTUNE: 1947-1958

On Friday, 24 January 1947, my father's diary had this entry: "Grand climacteric of my life should have been celebrated today. Owing to various circumstances it was not. I am 63 years old today, having been born on Jan. 24, 1884."

Had he known, this climacteric was the harbinger of both a cataclasm and a cataclysm for himself and the family. The partition of India and consequently of the Punjab opened the door to a vale of sorrows from which there was no exit. All the unpaid bills of his 63 years now came in for payment. And the payment was demanded in the currency of pain, grief, deprivation and poverty.

We had been living in No. 1 Davis Road since 1945, sharing the house with the widow and children of *chacha*

Hamid. As the waves of communal violence mounted and life became insecure in a predominantly non-Muslim locality we shifted on 4 June to 65/6 Temple Road, near the Queens Road end of the road. It was a small, old bungalow in a bad physical shape and cost Rs. 48 a month in rent with Rs. 250 as advance. But it was surrounded by Muslim houses and had the solidly Muslim quarter of Mozang on its two sides. We lived there in relative peace, though the city was burning and Muslims and non-Muslims butchering each other with glee and an abandon which demonstrated how low man could sink if given the chance. Humanity wilted and died before unashamed brutality.

On 15 August Abdul Aziz wrote in his diary:

"Last night was a remarkable one in many ways.

1) Lord Mountbatten handed over charge of the new country of Pakistan to Quaid-i-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah, Governor-General of Pakistan. A great goal achieved, and a great dream realized.
2) It was the Shabiqadr. How it synchronised with the creation of Pakistan is a remarkable coincidence.
3) It was a terrible night for us. There was exchange of gun & rifle shots in our neighbourhood & there were terrible doings. The gurdwara was set on fire, and its heroic defenders were shot down one by one by gunmen of Mozang, who had set fire to the Gurdwara, so that those heroes had fire behind them and bullets in front of them.
4) Pakistan Radio gave some good recitations from *Quran* and some fine melodies in the form of *na'ats* – a terrible contrast between sweet music on the one side & this carnage of heroic defenders of Gurdwara on the other."

On 17 August (Sunday) the entry runs: "The Bounders of the Boundary Commission gave the Award, & chalked

Batala Tahsil out of Pakistan & handed it over to Hindustan. A greater tragedy could not be conceived."

A thousand year-old history was overturned. New frontiers were drawn. Two or three million people were killed; nobody knows the exact number. Twenty million of all communities were forced to leave their ancestral homes under unspeakable conditions. A million girls and women were abducted and raped. Babies and children were thrown into the air and made to fall on the cutting edges of swords or the sharp points of spears, in the presence of their parents. Houses were set on fire and all their inmates roasted to death. Many trains carrying refugees to and from the new dividing line were stopped and every old and male passenger killed in cold blood and every woman carried away as booty. Ghost trains arrived at their destinations full of their grisly freight. The subcontinent had not seen migration and murder on this scale in its entire history. Mankind had gone mad, not metaphorically but clinically.

In the western wing it was the Punjab which bore the brunt of this fit of insanity. Branches of countless Muslim families had been living on both sides of the new boundary. Now they paid for this accident of history and the cruel incompetence, recklessness, moral insensibility and blind vision of their leaders. Some paid with their lives, dying horrible deaths. Some paid even a higher price: their wives and sisters and daughters in Sikh and Hindu hands. All paid the price of losing whatever they possessed in this world.

World history is made up of migrations: tribes, clans, peoples, races moving *en masse*, leaving their homes, and walking or riding thousands of miles. But this had happened voluntarily, after full preparations, and in stages. There was no deadly enemy pursuing them. Natural death took its toll. But there were no large-scale massacres. What the Punjabi Muslims faced in 1947 was an unprecedented phenomenon. It is not easy to leave one's home. It is harder to leave it under duress. What drove them to uproot themselves was neither

economic benefit nor hope of a better life, but the hazard of stark, certain, merciless death. They were not making sacrifices for the sake of the creation of Pakistan, as Pakistani leaders, historians and newspapers tell us everyday, but running away from a lethal disaster. This is an eye-witnessed, personally-experienced fact. The rest is myth. Our history is buried under many layers of myths.

On 29 August *Manma* Majid's family – his wife, older daughter and Masi Barkat – arrived from Batala "after a series of vicissitudes and fits of dark despair" (my father's diary entry). On 15 September *Manma* Majid himself reached Lahore from Delhi, with harrowing experiences of narrow death which made all of us shiver. The family lived with us for the next three years. On 23 October Ali Muhammad and his wife arrived at our house from Walton camp where the incoming refugees were received and accommodated by the government under atrocious conditions until their relatives came to reclaim them or they had a place to go to. They had had a hair-raising journey as part of a caravan of fleeing humanity from Kaithan, made part of the way on ox carts and part on foot. They were shrivelled in body and could not walk properly. The once immaculately dressed and neat and clean Ali Muhammad was in tatters, his eyes hollow with disbelief, his tongue unable to talk without long pauses, his feet spotted with scratches, cuts and blisters. My father embraced him, broke down and wept bitterly – his third uncontrollable cry in life. My mother wept too.

Ali Muhammad and his wife Fatima stayed with us for a few hours and then went to the house of their son, Iqbal, who lived in 48D Chauburji Quarters on Multan Road. On the next day his condition worsened and my father went to see him and was with him from 5 to 9.30 P.M. He died the same night at 4.00 A.M. It was the day of the *Hajj*, a Saturday, and my father's diary reads: "Perhaps the holiest day of the year. He couldn't have had a better day" to die.

What an end to a man with whom my *phupho* Wazir had fallen in love in 1880s in Bahawalpur and for whom she had left her husband within a few days of her marriage to Umar, and never married again. This tall, handsome, amiable, sweet-tempered, inoffensive man had served as personal physician to the rulers of Suket and Mandi, been honoured by them with the award of a *khil'at* and many costly gifts, and had then retired to Kaithan and lived in comfort in his ancestral home. He had visited us often in Batala and stayed for weeks. He was very dear to my father; common blood strengthened by shared tastes. His death following his appalling and hideous journey shook my father to his core.

In the last week of December 1947 the youngest of my sisters (but senior to me by nearly three years) was married to a cousin. The marriage proved an immediate disaster. She was in love with another cousin without his knowing it. This was a true, genuine, pure love which lodged in her heart. It was her own secret which nobody knew. I alone had an inkling of it, but I was too young to take a serious note of it. Anyway she spent one day with her husband, returned to our house and never went back. A divorce was later arranged amicably. She had followed in the footsteps of her *phupho* Wazir. She did not marry again, lived with her parents and after my mother's death with my father, and after his death on her own and in wretched loneliness for 16 years. Her eldest sister, her husband and children whom she had loved and helped so much neglected her after my father's death. The daughters of the other sister never visited her. I was out of the country till 1985. At the end she died alone and unattended in the Mayo Hospital of Lahore. A pathetic end to a sad story.

On 8 January 1948 Abdul Aziz's eldest sister Barkat passed away at 2.15 A.M. in our house "after a long illness & much suffering extending over twenty years or more" (father's diary entry).

In my father's mind nature had planted a shock absorber which helped him in maintaining his sanity when his personal world was tottering and reeling. He was not unfeeling or indifferent. He did not wear his heart on his sleeve. This reticence, undemonstrativeness and the stiff upper lip had come to him from two sources: his father and his English training at a young age. He was a perfectly normal man and had the ordinary man's sensitivities. But he did not talk about his woes, proclaim his grief, declare his hurts, give vent to his feelings or beat his breast. This natural gift gave him peace of mind, capacity to work hard amid depressing circumstances, unparalleled contentment, and a long life. He could forget the injuries inflicted by his surroundings in the pleasure of his work and the joy of reading books. At least that is my impression; though I cannot believe that deep inside him there was not a stormy tumult.

But what about Zainab? Though of the same blood, she was made of a different clay, and she belonged to a different sex. The shock of the loss of Batala left a mark on her demeanour that I noticed at once. She stopped smiling as often and freely as she used to. Laughter came to her but rarely, and it was strained. The Qutb Road bungalow had been sold a year earlier and the family was in pocket. So it was not the lack of money that was worrying her. But in my ignorance and youthful insouciance I thought it was.

So one day I said to her,

"Amman, why are you taking the loss of Batala so much to heart? Next year I will pass my M.A. examination and then I will get a good job and you will have enough money to spend. This is not the end of the world."

"My darling, you don't understand. You will when you grow up. It is not the dearth of money that is gnawing at my vitals. Money and I have been strangers for some time now, and I am resigned to it. No, it is not money."

"Then what is it? Why don't you smile and laugh and be of good cheer as you always have been?"

"Listen to me, son. Batala was not a haveli full of valuable things, gold and silver, and our life savings. My darling, these things come and go. I have learnt to try to live without them. I will try more. But we have lost our home. Our home. Do you understand? Our home. You will earn money for me and I will have more to spend. But you cannot give back to me my home. However good a son you may be and however rich we may become again, we will remain homeless all our lives."

"But you haven't lived in Batala that long. Since your marriage in 1903 you spent only a few years there. You lived in Kabul and Rangoon, Hissar and Montgomery, and Lahore and Ballamabad. Was Batala really your home?" Quite unknowingly I was being perverse. I was trying to comfort her. I achieved the opposite.

"My son, you don't make a home everywhere you live. You have only one home, and that lives in your heart. Yes, I have been away from Batala for a long time. Does that matter? If you live away from your parents for many years, even all your life, will you say you have no parents?"

Glimmers of understanding began to penetrate my mind. She continued.

"I was betrothed in Batala. I was married in Batala. I had my first child there. Then your father went away to London and I was in Kabul for four years. But I spent one half of each year in Batala. After your father's return he and I, and often I alone and the children, visited Batala for long stays. It is not the number of years that matters. Love is measured by the intensity of its feeling, not by the length of its duration. Nobody tells you where your home is. You feel it in your heart. Consider my case. I was born in Dodhi and spent my first 17 years there; take away the earliest 5 or 6 when the child is not really conscious of his surroundings. So I knew

Dodhi for say 10 years. After that if there was any place which I could call my own it was Batala. A home is principally a cluster of associations, memories and feelings, of sensations which cling to you, of experiences which mould your life. Most of what I remember, good or bad, happy or sad, happened in Batala. My marriage. My living there with your grandmother, grandfather and great grandmother. In my remembrances every room, verandah, courtyard, roof top, every nook and corner of the haveli is peopled with men and women who loved me and whom I loved. The places and moments of death of *Amman* [Nur], *Waddi Amman* [Zuhra] and *Tayaji* [Ghulam Nabi] are etchėd on my memory. My father died there and is buried there. My mother lies there in a grave. My daughters were married there. My life is made up of these recollections. These recalls and what they bring with them are my past. Where that past was spent was my home. You want me to forget Batala and make Lahore my home. Can you ask for the impossible? Can one forget one's past? Only the insane or the dead can. You can walk away from an event or place and turn to other things, but the echoes never still; like ripples they move endlessly. The ivy catches and cleaves at the wall. I am the ivy; Batala was my wall."

She went on, "we are now homeless, my son. This has broken our hearts. But let us not deny it. We are exiles in what people are calling our own country. They don't realize that home is not a piece of territory but a piece of one's heart. I have no home, no habitation, no place I can call my own. All is dead, gone beyond recall. Life is now a hollow form with empty hands. How long can one live without a home? *Main kithè jawan. Main ki karan, jan?* [Where can I go? What can I do, my darling]". The world of pathos and despair in the last Punjabi sentences cannot be translated.

There was moisture in her eyes when she had begun to speak, and her eyes were marred with pain. As she went on her weeping eyes jewelled a great regret. At the end her

tears were let loose like rills in springtime. As she pronounced her anguish in the last two short sentences she pulled me into her arms, and hugged me to her breast. I put my arms around her neck, and saw that her eyes were haunting recesses, full of pain and grief. We kissed each other and cried uncontrollably. Mother and son were shedding hot tears to mourn their dead delight.

My mother was dead within 8 months of this elegiac conversation. She had lost the will to live. They say she died of meningitis. That is what the doctors said. They were right in clinical terms. I say she died of a broken heart. I knew what ruins lay in that heart; the doctors did not.

The loss of Batala struck my father too as a clap of thunder. He had also lost a home. But he had an additional reason to feel wretched. In the haveli of Batala there had been all the family papers and correspondence, and the 25,000-volume library which he and his father had collected in 50 years. He was also a broken-hearted man. But he did not die of the shock. He had an efficacious safety-valve in his work. My mother had no such bulwark or anchor.

When my sister was married in December 1947 my mother fulfilled all her usual duties and did all the expected things, but she moved like an automaton. And when the bride returned home permanently without giving any reason for the break my mother was deeply hurt, but she did not utter a word of reprimand, made no complaint; she just asked *Mami* Bali to look after the girl. And when Bali asked, "*Apaanji*, where are you going?", she answered, "You know where." Bali looked at her, puzzled by the reply. I overheard the exchange of words, knew what my mother meant, and went into my room and cried my heart out. After Batala was I going to lose my mother too? The thought was too horrendous to contemplate. Something inside me broke. Since that day I spent as many hours as possible with her, talking to her aimlessly just to hear her voice, staring at her

for minutes on end like a lover at the parting hour to treasure every feature in my mind's eye, savouring every moment of her presence. The eternal son, the eternal lover of his mother.

The summer of 1948 was exceptionally hot. My father suggested that we should go to Quetta (where my eldest sister Akhtar was then living) for a few months and come back when Lahore's weather had turned bearable. But, he said, he would not go with us. His work on *Hir* was at a critical stage, and he could not leave it for such a long time. "But you can do this work in Quetta", my mother said. He said it was impossible to carry with him all the manuscripts and thousands of pages of his notes. The loss of even one sheet would be disastrous. My mother did not want to leave him behind, but in the face of his insistence she agreed to go without him.

Mother, Kishwar and I left Lahore by train on the morning of 29 May (a Saturday) and arrived in Quetta in the afternoon of the next day. After a week mother had fever. She was already thin and weak, and we thought it was nothing but exhaustion after the long journey. Two days later the temperature shot up to a dangerous degree, and a doctor from the Combined Military Hospital was called in. He book a few tests and after 48 hours diagnosed that she was suffering from an attack of meningitis. He added that the disease had entered its second and incurable stage. This stunned us. A telegram was sent to Lahore, Father and sister Razia left Lahore on 17 June.

My father's diary entry of 18 June reads: "Reached Quetta at 3.45 P.M. My wife was ill, but there was no sign of the impending tragedy. She was very pleased to see us, esp. Razia whom she did not expect. We little suspected that the few hours' talk we had with her this evening was to be her last. It was so lucky that we came today. The next day would have been too late."

On 19 June (Saturday) he wrote: "My wife's illness took a serious turn last night. Violent head ache came on all of a

sudden; & by morning she had become unconscious. The doctors declared her condition to be very serious, with slender hopes of survival. Lumber rapture was performed, and Meningitis was diagnosed, which was after examination found to be of secondary & serious (incurable) type."

She died on 20 June (a Sunday). Father's diary of that day contains two terse sentences: "At about 11:30 [A.M.] today the best of wives had ceased to be. My life-companion was a gem, and, in many respect, the noblest of women." Below this English text he wrote a Persian couplet:

Bar een rawaq-i-zabarjad nawishta anḍ ba zar
Kéh juz nikoi-i-ahl-i-karam na khwahad mand.

(It is an inscribed in gold on this green-blue globe,
that nothing will abide except the virtue of the virtuous)
Behind these few words lay an unfathomable ocean of pain.

On her death her age was 62 years, 4 months and 18 days. She was buried the same evening in a graveyard under the overhang of a hill. In spite of his miraculous power to conceal his feelings my father was deathly pale. On the way back from the burial his legs were shaking and once he tottered. He neither cried nor wept in front of his children or anyone else. But in the next several days he disappeared into his room for several hours. When he emerged we could see from his puffed up eyes and trembling lips that he had been crying. His feelings passed across his face like clouds. He took each of the daughters into his arms, kissed her and said words of comfort and solace. He made me sit in his lap and pressed me to his chest for several minutes, but did not utter a word. Our physical closeness and his arms around my back spoke for him. He did this several times a day. His eyes were sunken but dry. When I cried, he did not stop me, just pressed me closer to his chest. He ate a little but forced us to have our normal food. He talked often of mother

without shedding a tear, but his voice was hoarse and his eyes moist. We wept and cried and wailed. He sat like a statue of stone. The fire inside him was consuming him, but he pretended to be normal. Only there was no smile on the lips or in the eyes and the muscles of the face had shrunk. How much this pretence cost him only God knows.

My father and mother had spent together 45 years and 3 months. Taking away the 4 years he was in London, they had lived together for over 41 years, with very short periods of separation when mother went away to Batala to visit Zuhra and Ghulam Nabi. They had spent all the summer vacations of the chief court and Islamia College at various hill stations, mostly in Mussourie, Nainital and Dalhousie. They shared a love for the mountains. They shared a lot of other things. But more vividly than anything else my father remembered the expression on his wife's face when, 28 years ago, she had given her pledge to support and encourage him in the realization of his intellectual ambitions. She had kept her word as if it were a religious obligation. There had been bad moments; she had not complained. Financial crises had come; she had not protested, nor said "I told you so". She had made sacrifices so that he would achieve his ideals. Many ill winds had blown her way while she had tried to make him happy; she had not sulked or groaned. For the sake of her love for him she had held many hurts at bay.

All this came back to Abdul Aziz's mind as he sat brooding in Quetta and memories lacerated his heart. Out of habit and long training he knew how to hide his sorrow behind a bland façade. But often, while talking about her in general terms, he would stop abruptly as if something was sticking in his throat. His periods of silence grew longer. He gazed at the wall or, if we were sitting in the lawn, into the horizon for many minutes. The wedding-cake splendours of her past of many years ago sped in review before his eyes. He was seeking the sight of a face that was now beyond human

vision. But the face didn't go away, refused to go away. It was lodged in his heart and etched on the inside of the eyelids. A beautiful, soft, pleasant face of which, he now realized, he had not seen enough in 40 years. The longer the companionship the more agonizing the parting. The dearer the object of love the more searing the sense of deprivation. In his imagination – what else was now left to him – he saw the young bride, shy and self-effacing; the much-changed wife whom he met next in Kabul, well groomed, confident, coquettish, playful, impressing him with her English, talking of princes and princesses, the darling of his mother and grandmother; then the companion of the days of his legal practice and college lecturing, mature, worldly-wise, patient, bearing the loss of many sons with unnatural calm, enjoying the visits to the hill stations, asking him about the new book he was reading, tutoring her daughters; then the wife of the squire of Ballamabad, dignified yet accessible, a heroine in the eyes of the women of the village, humble, compassionate, happy with her new baby son; then coming down in the world without compromising her peace of mind, still calm, still composed, still unruffled, but capable of speaking out if the need arose.

The whole film of their married life ran before his unseeing eyes again and again and again. The bride of tender years slowly growing into a matron with silver in her hair, and yet slender and straight. The autumn of the beautiful was beautiful. He missed her just as his father had missed Nur after her death. The same anguish in his heart, the same dreams, the same regrets, the same joys. Visions appeared and vanished. Memories came rushing in. His feelings were in a jumble. Everything was mixed up: sorrows of the present, joys of the past – regrets, remorse, shock, tenderness, commotion, yearnings, admiration, rapture, tension, despondency. Time was like the twilight that neither rises nor sets.

And thus days passed but memory strengthened. He remembered how her words were dowered with healing

grace, how she was the breath of mercy passing over his existence, how she spoke with the majesty that stoops to conquer the hearts of people. The more he thought of her and the past the more his heart ached. He had been with Zainab for 45 years. He was fated to go on living without her for the next 22 years. But he did not know this. Nobody knows his future.

This is the story of my mother's death – a noble woman who lived for her husband's ideals and ambitions and her children's' happiness, and died for them. We left her in Quetta. She sleeps there under the shade of a mountain, amid the alien corn, among an alien people. May God's hand be upon her soul in eternity!

Long after his return to Lahore, I think at some time in 1950, he said to me one day, "Son, I have told you many times before how your mother, knowingly but indirectly, helped me in my research and writing. I am not going to repeat it. But you must remember two things. Your mother suffered a lot for the sake of my work. That work is still incomplete. I am an old man. I want you to pray that God gives me time enough on this earth to finish what I began with her blessings. Secondly, I want you to give me your word that if I die before completing the *Hir* text you will arrange for the publication of whatever is ready. This work is as much mine as your mother's. I think there are three equal partners to it: Waris Shah who wrote it, I who prepared his true word, and your mother who suffered so much for the sake of its completion. It is a tribute to her. It must be published. And once again I tell you. Few husbands have owed so much to their wives."

I gave him my promise. I also prayed for his long life. God heard my entreaty. My father lived to complete the text and see it published.

I am glad father realized how much my mother had suffered so that he should be happy. But his own ordeal had just begun. Adversities came hard on the heels of one another.

My mother had died on 20 June. I left Quetta on 9 August to appear in my M.A. examination in Lahore. But father did not return till 2 October. He had never in his whole adult life been away from his work for more than 3 or 4 days. Now for over three months he had done nothing but mourn and remember his wife, however silently, secretly, mutely, privately, behind closed doors. That is a measure of the depth of his travail, the size of his calamity, the desolation of his heart. He returned to Lahore wrapped in an opaque shroud of personal misery.

His grief was compounded with gloom at his financial prospects. He recoiled from the empty façade of hope. He took soundings everywhere, but with almost sadistic glee the opportunity to make some money continued to elude him. Whenever a fresh wind of expectation blew his way something happened to block its path. Hope, like the caprice of a harlot, held out only promises, no relief. Day by day complications grew like tropical plants. The spectre of poverty haunted him. There was no break in the clouds of fear.

He would have walked this weary way for God knows how long and in what state had it not been for the loving presence of *Manma* Majid's family in our house. By ourselves Kishwar and I could not have done much to pull father out of his trough of despondency. We too were going mad with grief.

Before explaining in what ways this family came to our rescue at the most critical and agonizing crisis in our lives I must stop to spell out its exact relationship with us. My mother's mother was Piranditti. Piranditti's mother came from a cluster of three villages near Batala: Behbel Chak, Faizullah Chak and Wazir Chak. Her family belonged to Faizullah Chak, but this branch had moved to Batala in the mid-seventeenth century. Piranditti's mother had only one sister, and this sister had only one daughter, Barkat. This Barkat married Shah din (died 26 November 1911 in

Batala) and had four children: Sardar Begum (1889-1963), Ghulam Dastagir (1896-?), Ummat-ul-Habib (1899-1924), and Iqbal *alias* Bali (1911-58). Of these three sisters two became my aunties in succession. Habib married *Manma* Majid in 1916, and they had two daughters: Husanara (1919-53) and Jahanara (1922-46). A year after her death her sister Iqbal married *Manma* Majid; they had no children. Both Husanara and Jahanara were considered by my parents as their real daughters and they spent a lot of their lives with us. I was particularly attached to Jahanara.

The eldest sister, Sardar, the most beautiful women I have seen, was universally known and addressed as Bibi. She married Ghulam Jilani of Amritsar, a veterinary surgeon in the Indian Army, in 1902 or 1903 and had the following children: Sultan Mahmud (1904-?), Aziz Sultana (1907-35), Sikandar (died 1941), Yusuf (1913-?), Suleiman (1915-98), Ikram (1921-88), Salima (1924-35), Khawar (1927-51), and Rabia (1930-47).

Several factors brought Bibi and her family close to us. By blood relationship through Piranditti's mother she was my mother's cousin. Two of her sisters became my *Mamis*. She lived in Amritsar which was very near to Batala. As Bali's family spent about half of every year with us in Batala and after 1947 lived with us for three years, contact with Bibi and her children was close and constant. Bibi had lost two of her elder daughters in the Quetta earthquake of 1935. As long as we lived in Batala she and her younger daughters often came to visit us, and when she returned to Amritsar it was usual for the daughters to stay back and live with us for weeks and when their school was closed for months. This brought them nearer to us. For my parents and myself Khawar and Rabia were as much a part of our household as were Husanara and Jahanara, and not having a younger sister and craving for one with whom I could play Rabia filled the gap, and I came to love her more than I have loved anyone

else in the family. These four girls were my sisters, more real and loving and caring than my real sisters.

The mere presence of four persons in the house was analgesic. Masi Barkat (*Maanji*), *Manma* Majid, *Mami* Bali and Husanara took the sting out of father's suffering. As I have said earlier, in the whole clan no other family was closer to us in compatibility, good understanding, tender feeling, fondness and harmony. There had always been a unique rapport between it and us. *Manma* Majid had been my mother's darling brother since his birth. Both of his wives were my mother's cousins. Their two daughters, Jahanara and Husanara, had been like daughters to my parents. I had always looked upon *Manma* and *Mami* as my second parents. *Maanji* was not only my mother's aunt but the only living member of the past generation. Apart from these relationships and ties we had lived together for many years. Now at this crisis they acted as a buffer between grief and a complete breakdown. Each one of them was a balm for our bruised hearts.

Manma Majid entertained father and lightened his burden of sorrow by talking about literature, Sherlock Holmes, his father and old shared times. He also recited classical poetry from the treasury of hundreds of ghazals which he knew by heart. This took father's mind away from his current worries, however temporarily. *Mami* Bali had a fine sense of humour and a keen judgement in regaling people with family anecdotes and pleasing them with light-hearted reminiscences. She used this flair to make father smile and forget the dark side of his life. Husanara was not as much of an extrovert as her late younger sister, but she was full of affection. She looked after all my father's daily needs, cooked his favourite dishes, massaged his legs and back, pressed his clothes, polished his shoes, and did a hundred other small but necessary chores to make his life easier.

Mami Bali's eldest and only surviving sister, Bibi Sardaran, who was then living on Firozpur Road, was a

frequent visitor, often accompanied by her only surviving daughter, Khawar, who was of my age. Apart from raising the spirits of my father by giving him her company, for she was an exceptionally understanding person, she eased my father's mortification by sharing with him the story of her own inflictions. In her life she had suffered one blow after another in losing his grown up children. In 1935 her eldest daughter, Aziz, only 28 years of age, had perished in the great Quetta earthquake. With her had died her two children and her 11-year old younger sister, Salima, who was visiting her. In 1941 her second 22-year old son, Sikandar, had been killed off the coast of Libya while serving in the British Indian army. In October 1947 she had lost her youngest and loveliest daughter, Rabia, at the age of 17. She used to say that in her life the one constant companion had been death.

Bibi Sardaran consoled my father by a different therapy. She talked of her own sufferings and woes, but in such a way that instead of adding to his distress she made him share her own traumatic experiences and attracting his sympathy. Whether intended or not, this method of palliating his suffering worked. She said, "*Bhaiji*, you know how my life has been a living death. One child after another. Each one young and dear and beautiful. Two daughters at one fell blow. And just a year ago I lost Rabia, the sweetest of my children. I know how much Zainab loved her. Life is nothing but a preparation for death." She went on in this strain for some time, remembered and praised my mother, and ended by saying, "*Bhaiji*, I know you are on the rack. Whatever I say will not end your agony. But there are people around you whose tortured existence is as much a burden as yours. I don't ask you to forget your loss. But when you think of Zainab's going away, think also of me and others like me who too have lost much."

I noticed that these words, and their variations told on her other visits, lessened father's strain, lightened his burden and

eased his mind. That was my impression. Khawar joined Husanara in putting father in a good humour. At least for a few hours we felt at peace with ourselves.

By far the greatest comforter was *Maanji.* She put the most efficacious salve on my father's heart by her gentle words. She was about 90 at that time, bent like a bow, walking with the help of a staff, carrying the burden of long years, and yet the most composed and calm person I have seen in my life. She was beautiful in her looks and even more beautiful in her inner self. Her face was a benediction. She spoke gently and tenderly, her words soft as down. To be with her was to see the world in a different light. Her piety and purity of spirit added wings to whatever she said.

She shared my father's grief by talking about it instead of running away from it. The magic worked. It mitigated his agony. She talked of God's purpose, life and death, the ways of destiny, the world to come, the good that the dead leave behind them, the pleasure of remembering the dear ones, the value of prayer, the final merger of the soul with its Maker, the promise held out by eternity, and the mercy, kindness and supreme will of God.

She often asked my father to come and sit on her bed, and then talked to him in her gentle way. The voice was low because it came from an old body, the message was loud and clear because it came from a pure soul. The frame was weak, the self was strong. The speech matched the sincerity of the heart. It assuaged my father's grief, Maanji recited some verses from the Quran and breathed at my father's face. He rose from the bed with a lighter heart, soothed and solaced. His countenance shone with an inner satisfaction.

I can never forget the good these people did to my father and to Kishwar and myself. All of us tasted the milk of human kindness and realized the spell cast by genuine sympathy and kind words. All these people are now dead, even the youngest of them, Khawar, but they have left a

legacy of happiness which will gladden my heart till the end of my days.

The prologue to my father's days of darkness had opened in 1946 and the conventional three acts of the tragedy played out in 1947-48. Let the calendar count the stark heart-breaking realities. In May 1946 he lost his affectionate uncle Ghulam Muhammad. On 30 December 1946 died Jahanara, the younger daughter of *Manma* Majid, who was like a real daughter to him. In January 1947 his cousin and brother-in-law, Muhammad Husain, breathed his last. In April his cousin Khurshid, Ghulam Muhammad's daughter, died during surgery. In August he lost Batala and all that it meant in terms of history, sentiment, associations, archives, documents, books and money. On 8 October died the 17-year-old Rabia, a niece who was very dear to him. In November one of his favourite cousins to whom he had been attached since his childhood in Bahawalpur, Ali Muhammad, died of the torment he had suffered in his fiendish journey imposed by partition. In December his daughter had an unsuccessful marriage. On 8 January 1948 his eldest sister Barkat died in our house. On 20 June he faced the greatest tragedy of his life: the sudden and unexpected death of his wife.

Within the space of two years he had lost some of his dearest relatives, his home, his wife and all his inheritance. There was hardly anyone to console him, to give him company, to share his woes. As a result of the partition the family had scattered, and everyone had his own problems to face and his own cross to carry. Old attachments and values had gone to the four winds. But in this tumult he stood unbent and strong. On his return from Quetta he threw himself into his work with the strength of ten men and the nonchalance of a dervish. Till now it had been his passion which drove him forward. Now he laboured to forget the tragedies which had overtaken him. Some people take to the bottle to drive the real, unpleasant world into

oblivion. To him work was an anodyne for his aches and pains. He lectured on history three days a week; taught French and German at the university; wrote his books on Mughal history; coached me in English and French; and increased the time allotted to *Hir*, partly because he realized that old age was upon him and partly because of his late wife's interest in its completion. All this left him busier than people half his age.

Soon afterwards he had to taste another bitter fruit of independence. An Urdu-speaking young man who had just taken his M.A. degree in history at the University of Aligarh and then fled to Pakistan in search of new pastures got a lectureship in a Lahore college. The university's department of history had been denuded of nearly all its staff by the departure of the Hindus and Sikhs, and now it was functioning on the strength of the teachers of different colleges who lectured at the university in addition to their routine full-time work in their colleges. Because of this dearth of teachers this deserter from Aligarh had a lucky break and began to lecture at the university.

After a few months the fancy entered his head that he should teach the paper on Mughal history. But the young intruder neither realized that my father had been teaching, researching and writing in this field since before his birth and was now a prominent member of the fraternity of South Asian Mughal historians, nor stopped to think that Abdul Aziz was his own father's age. His ambition outstripped his qualification, ability and standing, and blinded him to every reality except his personal advancement.

He first tried to persuade the head of the department to let him lecture on Mughal history. When this did not work he approached the registrar and the vice-chancellor through his connections with the Urdu-speaking lobby in Lahore. He failed here too. Then he showed his true colours and, falling back on the practice of intrigue learnt to good

purpose in Aligarh, conspired with some of the students. He incited them to protest against the allegedly poor quality of Abdul Aziz's teaching. It should be recalled that at that time the only university in West Pakistan was in Lahore. The partition had destroyed academic standards. Boys and girls who would not have dared even to apply for admission to M.A. classes before 1947 were now welcome. Of these new entrants several were from Delhi. United Provinces and Bihar. They looked down upon the Punjabis whose language and culture they condemned as inferior to their own. This group sided with the Aligarh man. The head of the department was aware of these moves and told Abdul Aziz, advising him to inform the vice-chancellor of the situation. Most students supported my father, and some even said that if he allowed they were ready to give the upstart a good hiding. My father, always a gentleman and used to the traditional value system and already bent under the load of his own adversities, snubbed his loyal student following. He wrote a letter to the vice-chancellor saying that his personal circumstances did not allow him to continue his lecturing. The moral vacuum from Aligarh taught Mughal history for about two years and then left the country; taught abroad all his life, did not write a single book, and not surprisingly today occupies a unique and very well-paid academic office under the federal government. Abdul Aziz lost his income of Rs. 120-150 a month.

My father never mentioned this incident to me. It was only in 1975 that I came to know of it from Professor Hameeduddin (then teaching at Harvard and on a visit to Pakistan), who was the head of the department at this time and therefore an eyewitness.

A year later my father was more than compensated for the loss of his income from the history department by a fortunate chance. He happened to meet at Sir Abdul Qadir's house Shaikh Ahmad and his European (probably Polish) wife Anna

Molka. The couple had recently come from England after qualifying in fine arts, and Mrs. Ahmad headed the newly established department of fine arts at the university. When she came to know that my father, though without any formal qualification in the field, had a vast knowledge of European and Islamic art, she immediately offered him a visiting professorship which he accepted. He was paid the standard fee of ten rupees a lecture, but as he lectured five times a week this brought in a welcome two hundred rupees a month. He continued to teach there for about 15 years and gave up when his age forbade such exertions.

Throughout their married life Zainab had been telling her husband about the necessity of making money and warning him against bad times if he failed to listen to her; and he had paid no heed to her exhortations. It is a matter of tragic irony that after her death he made every possible effort to improve his financial condition. Perhaps the fact that he was now obliged to draw up and manage the domestic budget himself made him realize how excellent had been Zainab's husbandry and how crippling his own incapacity to run the household in the prevailing straitened circumstances.

Immediately after his wife's death he began his efforts to earn a living or arrange a research grant.

In the odd pages of his diary that have survived the vandalism of his eldest daughter and her family I have found terse entries at irregular intervals which chronicle his desperate efforts to improve his plight.

He sent in an application in response to an advertisement for a professorship of history at the University of Dacca. It was not entertained because he had already crossed the age of retirement. He inquired from the Islamia College people if they could use his knowledge and experience; only to be told that he was too old. He asked his friend Khalifa Shujauddin, who wielded much influence in the affairs of the Anjuman-i-Hamayat-i-Islam, to

persuade the Anjuman to establish an historical research institute in or outside the college and accommodate him in it. Nothing came out of the suggestion. He appealed to Oriental College to assist him in his work on *Hir* as it fell in the field of its specialization. The college expressed its inability to be of any help. He approached the Punjab University with a carefully drawn up scheme for founding a research institute of history; the answer was that no funds were available for the purpose. He took his proposal to the Punjab government; his submission was not even acknowledged. There is also an unclear entry, dated 21 February 1953, in the diary saying, "Reminder to Bahawalpur drafted", which means most probably that he had been writing to the Nawab for a research grant. The effort turned out to be futile.

During these years most of his income was scanty and irregular. Apart from his salary from the department of fine arts at the university, which was modest and only paid for the lectures actually delivered (which means nothing came in during the long vacations and other breaks), his earnings came from paper-setting and script-marking in fine arts and irregularly in history. The laughably petty size of this income may be seen from what he received in 1953 and duly wrote down in his diary: Rs. 214 for intermediate history paper, Rs. 110 for intermediate French and Rs. 67 for Diploma in French, Rs. 15 for B.A. fine arts, Rs. 64 for B.A. French, and Rs. 56 for intermediate French. That makes Rs. 526 in the whole year. He was publishing and selling his own books on Mughal history which brought in around Rs. 200 a year. At Kishwar's divorce he had transferred to her his shares worth Rs. 5,000 in the Batala Engineering Company so that in case he died she would have something to fall back upon. As she was living with us the dividend received became a part of domestic revenue. I had become a lecturer in March 1952 at a salary of Rs. 150 a month. But as I was posted in Multan I

could not spare even a part of it to support my father. In 1953, I was transferred to Government College, Lahore, and the service grade was raised to Rs. 250 plus a dearness allowance. So I was able to contribute to the domestic expenses. But that did not improve the situation a whit because my father was saving as much as he could for the expenses to be incurred by my marriage, which took place in February 1955.

In 1949 my father and my *chacha's* widow had submitted their joint claim for compensation for the property we had left behind in Batala. The government's Department of Refugee Rehabilitation, established in 1947 to help the people who had fled from their ancestral homes in horrible conditions or had become penniless through loss of assets, became from the very beginning a great racket of corruption. If any among the local population pretended to be refugees and bribed their way into the possession of evacuee property (left behind by the non-Muslims when they went away to the new India), there were no rules to stop the spree. Some of my Coffee House friends whose ancestors had lived inside the walled city for centuries managed to have palatial bungalows or commodious flats-cum-shops on the Mall allotted to themselves. The genuine refugees, mostly without a roof over their heads, either broke into abandoned houses, shops and factories and later made the crime legal by bribing the officials concerned or pulling wires, or lived with their relatives or in refugee camps. *Chacha* Hamid's widow had been living since 1944 in a house on Davis Road owned by a Hindu. She went on living there until it was legally allotted to her in lieu of her claim for compensation.

But father was living in a rented house owned by a Muslim. He did not break into or take forced possession of any evacuee property. He was incapable of doing such a thing. He did not ask any of his influential friends to speak to the relevant authorities on his behalf. His heightened sense of self-

respect stood in his way. He had no money to bribe the clerks and officials to expedite a decision on his case. When the government thought that most of the refugees had been settled to their (i.e., the government's) satisfaction, it invented a new scheme by which the refugee whose claim had for some reason not been met was issued a coupon which he could use like money in the auction of the surplus evacuee property (nearly 90% of Lahore had been owned by non-Muslims).

The majority of the refugees had put in inflated claims and had been allotted property proportionate to these fake entitlements. In the absence of justice, bribe, influence or connection, father's and Mrs. Hamid's joint claim of half a million rupees for the haveli and the agricultural land abandoned in Batala had been scaled down to Rs. 120,000 by the government. My auntie received her own half in the shape of the house she was already occupying. It became her property. In 1951, four years after losing Batala, father was given a coupon with the face value of Rs. 60,000. By this time most of the evacuee property had been disposed of and father desperately needed cash to run his home and continue his research. So he sold his voucher in the open market at half its value. In other words, what he got after four years of painful waiting for all that he had lost was a sum of thirty thousand rupees. With this money he paid off his debts, published one of his books on history, continued his work on *Hir*, and invested Rs. 10,000 in the Punjab Co-operative Bank.

What makes heart-rending reading, even now after the lapse of over half a century, are the score or so one-or two-line entries in his diaries of 1948-51. They chronicle his visits to the offices of the various people dealing with the disposal of claims. He spent hours waiting in queues, begging the clerks to shift his file, and remonstrating with the tin gods of bureaucracy. He paid an immense price in personal suffering, degradation, time and energy to get those thirty thousand rupees. He was then 64 years of age.

Except his last book, on the imperial Mughal library, father printed and sold all his books himself. This was another burden that he had been carrying since 1940, when his first book was sent to the press (it appeared in 1942). The reason for this was that no publishing house in Lahore was ready to publish these books, even after the first one had received laudatory reviews and my father's name was counted among the leading historians of the Mughal period.

The story of the printing and selling of these books is worth telling. The printing was done at the Ripon Press on Bull Road, one of the best in Lahore. Its proprietor, Mirza Muhammad Husain, was a conscientious man and supervised the composing with hawk-eyed care. That is what made my father go to that Press again and again. Every manuscript contained thousands of diacritical marks and accents. This was considered necessary if the reader was to pronounce correctly the hundreds of proper names, names of articles and implements in use and other current technical terms. Therefore the compositors' work was of great responsibility. My father received the galley proofs, read and corrected them and sent them back to the press. Sometimes 3 or 4 galleys were called for. Mirza sahib neither protested nor frowned – how different from the publisher-printer of today who does not employ any proofreader and cares little for his own or the author's reputation. The next stage was the reading of page proofs. These were also checked more than once. When finally the text was ready and met my father's approval one thousand copies were printed. My father had already purchased the paper, and now got the book bound. At last the book was delivered at our house.

Then began the more arduous task of selling it. Some copies were given to selected bookshops to be sold on commission basis. My father advertised the book in the history journals, and that brought in some orders of purchase. But all this only led to the sale of one or two

hundred books. How to dispose of the entire stock and make some money or at least break even? This was not easy.

Khan Bahadur Mian Afzal Husain, an old family friend, suggested that my father should get from the Director of Public Instruction a circular saying that the book is "recommended for purchase by all school and college libraries." The Director was S. M. Sharif, another family friend and very close to *Chacha* Hakim Jan. When approached he issued the required circular letter whenever a new book was ready for sale.

The next stage was to send a copy of the book to every school and college along with a copy of the circular. For a research scholar with a heavy workload and in his declining years this was a tiring and time-consuming exercise. Every copy was packed and addressed, a copy of the circular letter was enclosed, and a letter from the author accompanied the packet. These parcels were carried in dozens to the post office and the pile posted per value post paid (VPP). My father had no helpers except my sister and myself. When I left Lahore, never to return, Kishwar alone was left to assist him.

The book was priced at Rs. 6 each. Every parcel sent out did not sell the book. Some headmasters and principals interpreted the official phrase "recommended for purchase" as an order and bought the volume. Others, who recognized the difference between "recommended" and "ordered", returned the parcel. Thus a number of copies came back unsold, and packing labour and postal expense were a dead loss. On the whole about one half of the print order could be disposed of, thus just paying for the paper on which they were printed and the binding. A calculation of the expenses incurred in publishing all the books and the total sale proceeds showed that my father spent several thousand rupees from his pocket without any return – a pocket which was fast emptying itself. Nobody came to his help, neither the university, nor the government, nor any research institution, nor any publisher.

Not only that. Even some relatives showed cruel indifference. On one occasion he had to make an immediate payment of Rs. 5,000 to the press. He asked one of his well-to-do nephews for a short-term loan. He excused himself.

After my father's death after 1970 several hundred copies of different volumes were stacked in my sister's house. When I returned to Pakistan in 1985 I gave away some of them to the libraries of Lahore, and the remainder to the Bait-ul-Hikma Library of Hakim Muhammad Said in Karachi. I don't know what it did with them.

In the 1970s a Muslim publishing house of Delhi published all my father's books. On discovering this and seeing the reprints in the library of the South Asia Institute of the University of Heidelberg, I wrote to the publisher pointing out that he had reprinted them without my permission and asking for a copy each for my record. He wrote back without apologizing for his unethical practice or sending me the reprints on the ground that all copies had been sold out. Pakistani publishers are so brazen-faced that they have been publishing and selling my own books without my authority or information or paying me any royalties while I am still alive and living in the country. Fearing a similar treatment of my father's books at their hands I arranged in 2001 for all his 5 books to be reprinted in an attractive 2-volume set by Al-Faisal Publishers of Lahore. For this I am grateful to Mr. Muhammad Faisal.

By the mid-1950s my father's financial situation was precarious. He was forced to subsist on a very modest scale provided that he gave up his research work and the preparation of the text of the *Hir*. Nothing could persuade him to take that step. He could not contemplate the abandoning of what was literally his life-work. Who would continue his research on Mughal history of which only two volumes had been published so far? Who could possibly complete his textual work on *Hir*, in which he had invested 25 years of hard labour, high emotion and now my mother's posthumous anxiety to get it in print?

At this time Chaudhri Muhammad Ali was the prime minister of the country. He had been a science student at Islamia College, but had been taught English by my father. Whenever he came to Lahore from Karachi and could spare the time he would visit us to pay his respects to his teacher.

I think it was towards the end of 1955 that he called at our house. He observed and noticed the very modest condition in which we were living. After a brief general talk he said, "Sir, can I be of any service to you?" Father thanked him and replied that he wouldn't like to bother a busy man like him. The prime minister understood that this was a case of a teacher not wanting to humiliate himself by asking a favour of his student. But intent on helping him, he adopted a sentimental approach. He said, "Professor sahib, if your son would offer you something, would you still say no to him? Students are like sons to their teachers. Why don't you tell me, your older son, what the problem is." In reply my father said, "Muhammad Ali, my needs are few but my work is imperative. It is my wish, my last wish in life, to complete my work on *Hir*. If the Pakistan Government were to give me a research grant just enough for me to stop worrying about my living and let me concentrate on my work I shall be happy." The prime minister promised that he would issue the necessary orders as soon as he was back in Karachi.

But the interval between issuing his order and its implementation by the bureaucratic machinery lengthened to the point where the prime minister lost his office. Even if he had survived the conspiracy hatched against him by Sardar Abdur Rab Nishtar and his clique, it is unlikely that the *babus* of the Karachi secretariat would have done the needful without a bribe. The small ray of light coming through the chink of an open door was shut out. Father's last hope died.

I had heard so much from father about the British universities and their methods and standards of teaching that as soon as I became a lecturer I began planning and

dreaming of going to England for higher studies as soon as I had completed the stipulated 5 years' service, after which I would be eligible to apply for study leave. Father was keen that I should go abroad. My teachers encouraged me in my plans. But the great barrier was the lack of resources. For the three years that I would be away the household budget would be minus my salary. Not only that. There was no provision in study leave rules for paying travel expenses. So I would have to borrow a few thousand rupees to pay for my and my wife's two-way journey and for any unforeseen extra expenses. On my return I would be obliged to repay this debt, and until this was done I would not be able to contribute anything to the running of the home.

In this almost impossible situation *chacha* Hakim Jan came to our rescue. I must remind the reader that he was the eldest son of Dr. Ghulam Muhammad, my father's uncle. He was also, by bonds of extraordinary affection and common tastes in most things, very closely attached to father. The two were more like brothers than cousins.

First he spoke to the Director of Public Instruction, S.M.Sharif, who was his friend, to ensure that my study leave was sanctioned without any hitch. Then he turned to my father and begged him to accept what he (Hakim Jan) was going to offer him: a generous allowance till the end of his life which would cover all expenses relating to the household, research work, printing of books, medical needs and any other call on his pocket. My father was dumbfounded and for a few minutes did not know what to say. He was still rehearsing in his mind the tenor and wording of his reply when *chacha* Hakim began to speak. I was not present when this happened, but after a few hours when I came home Hakim Jan's words were so fresh in father's memory that he repeated them to me. As far as I can recall this gem of a cousin had said this:

"Bhai sahib, please hear me out. By taking upon myself the complete financial responsibility of your family I am paying back a very small portion of the debt my father owed to your father. Do you think we have forgotten these things? They are embalmed in our memory. Let me recall them to your mind. *Tayaji* [Dr. Ghulam Nabi] gave my father the love, affection and solicitude of a father, not of a brother. He educated him, thus saving him from leading the disreputable life of a wastrel and scrounger. He paid for both his marriages. He bought him a house in Amritsar. He got him a job in Kabul, persuading King Habibullah to pay him more than your father was getting as his salary. All the wealth and honour that my family enjoys today we owe to him. Had Dr. Ghulam Nabi not taken my father in hand and made him what he ultimately became, today I and my brothers would have been humble clerks in some office or owners of a tobacconist's kiosk or in some other equally lowly position. Before he died my father had said something to me which I want you to hear. His exact words were: 'We owe so much to Ghulam Nabi that if, after my death, any of his children are in trouble it is my order and my will and testament that you should help them'. I still remember the most moving words he had used: 'If Ghulam Nabi's children are in need of a shoe you will make a shoe out of your body's skin and bow down to put it on their feet. But even if such a time comes and you do what I have ordered we will still be in their debt. You should never let this escape your mind. Otherwise you will be torturing my soul.' Bhai sahib, by allowing me to be of service to you now you will be pleasing the souls of both your father and my father. I am merely obeying my dead father's edict. What I give you is neither charity nor loan nor benefaction nor bounty. It is a tiny part of the payment of the gargantuan debt my father and I have owed you."

Father broke down, embraced his cousin, and both freshened with tears the memories of their respective fathers, talking for a long time of their lives and loves and the heart-warming values of times past. I doubt if my father would have accepted such help from any one but Hakim

Jan. I don't know what would have happened had he refused the offer. Starvation? Death? Suicide? I don't know. A thought hardly bear thinking.

Anyway, from that time onwards till 1965 Hakim Jan and after his death his sons looked after every need of my father. I left for England with a light heart, knowing that I was not leaving father to face an impending doom. When Hakim Jan died suddenly of a heart attack on 23 January 1963 his sons, Asghar Ali and Azhar Ali, continued to shoulder the responsibility. It was only in 1965, when I had settled in Khartoum and paid off my debts, that I began to support father and asked Asghar and Azhar to stop the allowance they had been giving my father. Who can pay back such kindness? And how?

This account of the eleven years of my father's life will remain incomplete without a mention of the major developments within the family in this period.

Less than two months after my mother's death the Peshawar branch committed what was to us and most of the family a *faux pas* of enormous proportions. Ghulam Muhammad's eldest daughter, Firoz, married her only son, Enait Kibria, in Lahore, on 18 August 1948, at the house of her younger sister, Mumtaz. Father was in Quetta and was shocked. Hakim Jan later apologized profusely and said that he had protested but to no avail. Much later, when Firoz and Mumtaz came to condole with my father, they were self-exculpatory, offering the excuse that the bride's father, Colonel Salamatullah, had insisted on the wedding date. My father forgave and forgot and our relationship remained unaffected.

On 14 August 1949 Husanara married Muhammad Husain at our house. In April 1950 Dr. Ghulam Muhammad's youngest son, Rahim Jan, married the daughter of Mian Amiruddin of the Indian Civil Service, then Agent to the Governor General in Baluchistan and a little later governor of the Punjab.

On 25 August 1951 Khawar, the only surviving daughter of Bibi Sardaran, died in Lahore. She was very dear to all of us, and this time it was my father's turn to visit Bibi day after day to console her.

In August 1953 Husanara fell ill. Let my father's diary describe the tragedy and also show how much he loved this niece.

18 August: "The alarming news of Husan Ara's serious illness reached us. When we went we saw her unconscious: she had been so for 3 days. Doctors came but were gloomy, & held out no hope."

19 August: "Husan Ara was removed to Mayo Hospital . . . . and was very well looked after there. In the evening Kishwar etc. went to Mayo Hospital & brought a very bad report of her condition. She would hardly survive the coming night."

20 August: "Husan Ara seemed better when I saw her at 8.15 this morning. But she passed away between 9 and 10. They brought home her remains. She was buried in the afternoon. A very good *janaza* procession did her the last honours."

This reminds me of a similar remark made by him on 30 December 1946 in Batala at Jahanara's (Husanara's younger sister) funeral. She was buried long after sunset, and on our way back home from the graveyard he had said to me, "A very bad day in our lives. I know how much you loved each other. That makes me very sad. But, considering the hour of the burial, only gas lamps to break the darkness, and not many people around, the *janaza* was so full of *raunaq*." A pious Sufi soul gone to her eternal home at the age of 24.

Maanji and *Mami* Bali took Husanara's death very badly. Both the daughters gone when still so young. Maanji was bewildered and, in spite of her great faith in God, shaken to the core. She had a right to a broken heart. Look at her personal life. She had one son and three daughters. The

son married a woman who was ill-tempered and did not like her in-laws. Though the son lived in Batala Maanji always stayed with us. Then her middle daughter, who was married to *Manma* Majid, died after giving birth to two daughters. The third sister was married to *Manma* Majid, and there were no children. Maanji's eldest daughter, Bibi Sardaran, had four daughters. All the four had died young. Now, with Husanara's death, she had lost all her grand daughters. Bibi was also plunged in grief at the event. The tragedy of her own loss of all her daughters lived once again, and she felt wretched and was inconsolable. A good part of the family had been wiped out. Poor Maanji and her daughters!

I was married to Zarina on 12 February 1955. Father's diary of the day was destroyed, so I don't know what he wrote therein.

Five months later, on 25 July, Maanji met her Maker. Father's diary says everything worth saying in 12 words: "A pure and pious soul! Heaven has taken her unto His Mercy".

On 1 September 1957 Zarina and I left Lahore by train for Karachi. We stayed there for a week and flew out to England on the 9th. On that day father wrote in his diary, "Khurshid the darling boy left Karachi for London". We were destined never to be able to live together again.

PUBLICATION OF THE *HIR*: 1959-1965

By 1957 father had almost finished his labours on the *Hir*. The text was now ready for publication, and he thought it would be no problem at all to get a good and caring publisher. The whole Punjabi literary establishment was familiar with what he had been doing, at least since 1934 when he had come to Lahore from Ballamabad. Many of its leading figures, in their meetings with him, had said,

"Well done, Shaikh sahib. You are doing a wonderful job. Nobody else could have done it. We are keenly looking forward to its appearance in print."

Now it turned out that their appreciation and laudatory remarks meant no more than formal, routine and empty courtesies. When he appealed to them to get him a publisher they could only manage a variety of excuses. He took the manuscript to a few publishers. Their response was discouraging: there was no market for such works.

Maulavi Zafar Iqbal was father's friend, was well aware of his work, and was also a neighbour. He arranged a meeting at his house between father and Naseeruddin Humayun of Qaumi Kutubkhana (a large publishing house) on 20 August 1955. Nothing came out of it. Time passed and he was getting worried about the prospects of the publication of what was his *magnum opus*. Occasionally a ray of hope would shine, only to vanish. Dr. Waheed Qureshi of the Oriental College came to see the manuscript on 14 October 1957, and on 3 November, as father's diary puts it, he "takes away many papers connected with the publication of *Hir*". Nothing was heard back from him.

By now he was desperate. He had knocked at many doors. None was opened. He was disconsolate, dejected and helpless. He was rescued from this gloom by a dubious deal offered by a man who turned out to be incorrigibly dishonest.

A little earlier Dr. Muhammad Baqir, who taught Persian at the Oriental College, had privately set up a Punjabi Adabi Academy for promoting and publishing Punjabi literature. He had known father since the 1930s when he was attending his French language class at the university. Now at this stage of father's dire straits he arrived on the scene and said he was prepared to publish the book through his Academy. Father was greatly relieved, settled the terms with him, and gave him the manuscript.

The *Hir* appeared in print in 1960. Father opened his advance copy with great pleasure, full of joy at seeing the fruit of his lifetime of labour in print. Then disaster hove into sight. After leafing through the volume and reading a few pages at random he was thunder-struck to find the atrocious manner in which it had been printed. The entire text teemed with errors. On about every page a couplet or a line was incorrectly printed. Several typographical oversights were inexcusable. At places one stanza after another was unreadable.

He complained to Baqir, who threw all blame on the scribes and the press. When reminded that it was the publisher's duty to supervise and correct what the scribes had written, he mumbled a few clichés to the effect that nobody worked honestly these days in the country and what the world was coming to, etc. Father insisted that a corrected new edition must be brought out as soon as possible and the entire printed stock destroyed to save his reputation as the editor of the text. Baqir agreed that this should be done and promised that it would be.

Baqir was a scoundrel of the first water and had no intention of doing what he had promised. He had printed 500 copies in a hardback edition and another 500 in the paperback so that students could afford to buy a copy. He did not want to bring out a corrected edition until he had sold all the 1,000 defective copies. This university professor and "scholar" was out to make money, not to publish literature. Father was then 76, infirm of body and exhausted. He rarely went out, and that only to visit relatives and the few friends who were still alive. How could he know that the defective print was being sold and his reputation ruined?

Anyway, he continued to press Baqir to hurry with the printing of the new edition, and Baqir continued to dispose of the flawed copies. The man with a doctorate from London who had taught literature all his life at a university did not know that it is an inexcusable and shameless dereliction of

duty to provide the scholars and students a text of a classic so riddled with errors. He was a stranger to such scruples. Whenever father reminded him of his promise he had a list of excuses ready to hand: the Academy had not yet received its annual grant from the government, he had gone away to Iran, good scribes were hard to come by, the machinery at the press had developed some defects, etc. When I came from Khartoum to see father he sent me to see Baqir and plead his case. I did so but found him procrastinating. The old man was frustrated and angry but unable to do anything. His contemporaries were all dead. He did not know anyone in the higher reaches of Authority who could put the fear of God into Baqir. He was at Baqir's mercy and had to wait and pray. It took Baqir 5 years to sell all the copies of the blemished edition, and then in 1965 he brought out the corrected print. By this time father was over 81 and not lively enough to savour his own triumph.

Baqir's devilry did not stop at what he had already done. Father had written a 50-page long introduction to the book, touching on as much of Waris Shah's life as was then known, analysing the conditions prevailing in the Punjab during and a little before the poet's time, showing how faithfully the story reflected the times and the milieu in which it was placed, bringing out the multi-dimensional genius of Waris Shah as a poet, uncovering the potent ingredients of Sufi thought and convictions underlying, and imparting a unique grandeur and depth to, the epic, comparing Waris Shah's poem with those written by others with the same story and plot, giving Waris Shah his proper place in the history of Punjabi literature, drawing parallels between the *Hir* and the great long poems written in the West by Chaucer, Goethe, Dante and others, above all enlarging on the true nature of spiritual love which was Waris Shah's true theme in his poem, describing the difficulties he had had to overcome in his work of preparing the correct text, naming and thanking all the persons who had

helped him and lightened his long weary way to the end of his labours, and, finally, declaring the great debt he owed to his dead wife who had denied herself so much in life so that he could pursue and complete his work on the poem.

Father wrote this introduction with his usual scholarly care, and as he had used the Urdu language to convey his meaning he thought it prudent to show it to Maulavi Zafar Iqbal to detect and correct any errors of expression. He was being extra careful because he was quite competent to write good Urdu, as is evidenced by his article on Hafiz Mahmud Shirani's death which appeared in the February 1947 issue of the Punjab University *Oriental College Magazine*. Zafar Iqbal approved the essay and made only a few amendments. The introduction was handed over to Baqir. It did not appear in the first edition. On inquiry he said he had misplaced the manuscript and could not wait to search for it as the book was ready for the binders. Father was extremely annoyed, but he gave another copy to Baqir to be published in the second edition. It did not appear in the second edition either. I was not in Lahore and don't know what excuses Baqir gave this time and how father reacted to the loss.

I was later told by several persons that, with some changes, Baqir had the temerity of publishing the introduction under his own name. I can't swear to the veracity of this report as I have not seen the allegedly published article. But I am an eyewitness of the fact that the introduction was written by father and corrected by Zafar Iqbal. Whatever happened to it, as far as I am concerned it was lost for ever.

Baqir had still another cloven hoof to show. During his research father had collected a large number of manuscripts of *Hir*. Now that the work was over he did not know what to do with them. He had no personal library since the one in Batala had been lost, to which he could add them. In certain things he was a simpleton, specially in material and monetary matters. Though he was in need of money it

never occurred to him that the manuscripts could be sold for an attractive price. His only consideration was that they should be preserved at a place where they were accessible to students, researchers and scholars of Punjabi literature. He talked about it to Baqir, who at once suggested that they should be donated to his Punjabi Adabi Academy which had its own library and where they would be put to good use. Father did not know that the Academy only existed on paper to enable Baqir to extract a grant from the government and publish as many books as it could without paying any royalties to the author. Even the office of the Academy was located in Baqir's residence in 12-G Model Town. Father gave away all the manuscripts to him. Within a few months Baqir sold them to the museum, the surprisingly larger than usual price was forthcoming because of the intervention and recommendation of his influential friend Mumtaz Hasan. Sharif Sabir, who prepared his own text of *Hir* 20 years later, told me in October 2003 that he saw and consulted these manuscripts in the National Museum in Karachi.

Birds of a feather flock together. Mumtaz Hasan was a very different man as our world judges men. A senior officer of the Audit and Accounts Service, he was in his life finance secretary to the federal government, managing director of the National Bank of Pakistan and many other things. He had great pretensions to being an intellectual. Stricken with a severe inferiority complex, the Pakistani academia and scholars have always looked at the bureaucracy with awe and trepidation, and are glad to bring in senior civil servants into high positions in their own ranks. Thus Mumtaz Hasan came to hold key offices in the Ghalib Library, the Anjuman-i-Taraqqi-i-Urdu, the Iqbal Academy, the Urdu Dictionary Project, etc. He was also the president of the Pak-German Forum, and in that capacity toured West Germany and acquired the original correspondence between Iqbal and his

Heidelberg woman friend Wagenast, allegedly for the National Museum of Pakistan. but nobody knows what happened to it. Contemporary and later newspapers carried reports about this scandal.

In 1966 he also presented himself to the literary world as editor of an English translation of *Hir*. This rendering had been executed in 1915-17 by Charles Usborne (1874-1919), a British ICS officer. Mumtaz Hasan wrote a 15-page Introduction to it, and persuaded the Lion Press of Karachi to publiṣh it. In 1973 this book was issued from London in the UNESCO translation series. For this edition he also annotated the text with some notes.

In these notes he said that *Hir* had been published in many versions, and then added, "In passing I should record that the latest version of *Hir* is the one published by the Punjabi Adabi Academy in 1960. It is the shortest of all the texts published so far, and several well-known passages have been excluded because in the Academy's opinion their authenticity is doubtful." After this comment, wherever this volume is mentioned in the notes it is referred to as the "Punjabi Adabi Academy *Hir*".

This treatment of my father's *Hir* passes understanding. Mumtaz Hasan could read the title of the book printed on the top of the page and also the name of the publisher printed at the bottom of the same page. But his eyes refused to read the editor's name appearing in the middle of the page. He was not so ill educated as to be unable to distinguish the author/editor from the publisher. Even if he wanted to publicize Baqir's Punjabi Adabi Academy, was he also obliged to refrain from mentioning the name of the editor who had spent 30 years of his life and much more in preparing the text? Writing in 1966, and again in 1973, he made no reference to the 1965 corrected edition of the text, but went on referring to the 1960 faulty print. So much for the state of his knowledge about the epic and its various texts.

However bewildering and puzzling this might appear to us today it was quite in keeping with the untutored but inflated ego of Mumtaz Hasan. When he talked of Iqbal he claimed that he himself and "perhaps another two or three" readers had fully grasped the poet's theory of *khudi*. His comments on Ghalib and other Urdu poets were equally foolish and extravagant. He was fond of pontificating, playing the oracle and issuing silly *ipse dixit*. Many among his audience heard him respectfully, not because he was right but because he was a high and mighty bureaucrat. Some of them laughed behind his back.

Remnants of his admirers still exist. When I mentioned his treatment of Abdul Aziz in my father's biography written in Urdu and published in 1999 in Lahore, one Mr. Mushfiq Khwaja wrote an angry letter to me from Karachi when I was living in Cambridge. He must have been deeply offended because the argument he gave in defence of Mumtaz Hasan was flimsy. He asserted that it was a legitimate and common practice to refer to a work published under the auspices of an institution as the work of that institution. And in his support he said that the publications of the Royal Asiatic Society are referred to as the Society's editions; he implied that the editor's name should not be mentioned. In my reply I pointed out that the works he mentioned were commissioned by the Society, while my father had laboured at his own initiative and without any help from the Academy, and therefore to refer to it as the "Punjabi Adabi Academy *Hir*" was not right. I don't know if he understood the point, but he did not write back.

Poor Mumtaz Hasan! Here was a man doomed to insignificance because of his own inadequacy and pretensions, but fighting hard to avoid the doom. His ethical principles were not as high as the offices he held. With an ego of an uncommon size he had developed and nursed the little cunning of little minds. This is what happens to men addicted to their own self-importance.

Father's *Hir* was finally published, though after much mental anguish and many tribulations, but the Punjabis were so indifferent to their own language and classics that no reviews appeared and no second printing was called for. It appeared as if Baqir circulated a few copies of the correct edition, mainly among his friends, and threw the rest into the Academy's storehouse. The Academy's *Hir* was not heard of again. My father died in 1970. I was living abroad.

Some other Pakistanis' treatment of my father and his *Hir* was no different than Baqir's, in fact even worse. A publishing house of Lahore, called Punjnad Academy, reprinted my father's book in 1964, thus obviously increasing the circulation of the grossly defective edition. Another reprint of it appeared later. Baqir took no notice of this piracy, or he might have engineered it for a consideration.

I returned home in 1985 and a year later a friend informed me that a publisher in Urdu Bazaar had reprinted this *Hir*. I bought a copy through this friend and after making sure that it was my father's work and had appeared under his name, I inquired, through a friend who also had his business in Urdu Bazaar, from the pirates (Aziz Publishers) why they had taken this step. The reply I received was in Punjabi and is not printable.

So much for the morals of this pirate. But his ignorance was far worse. In the beginning of my father's book there was an annotated list of the manuscripts he had used and whose variant lines or couplets he had reproduced in the footnotes. Each manuscript was allotted a number and this number was carried by every line or passage reproduced in the footnotes, so that the reader could know in which manuscript(s) it occurred. The Urdu Bazaar pirate omitted this list of manuscripts from his edition but retained the footnotes. This ruined the work, but the stupid publisher did not realize that these footnotes were of no use without the list of the manuscripts.

Not content with his handiwork, the publisher then asked somebody called Iqbal Salahuddin, who must have been a teacher or scholar of Punjabi literature, to write an introduction to the book. This author's integrity and knowledge may be judged from the facts that he neither cared to inquire if the book was being reprinted with the permission of the holders of the copyright, nor did it occur to him that by omitting the descriptive list of manuscripts the footnotes had lost their *raison d'être*. For several years this ravaged edition was being sold and used in the teaching of Punjabi literature in the colleges and the Punjab University.

Between the years that my father had finished his work on *Hir* and when he was seeking a publisher he did some exploratory investigations for the preparation of two books relating to the *Hir*. One project aimed at producing a dictionary of *Hir* containing the definition, semantics, connotation, denotation, derivation, idiom, usage and meaning of all the difficult, unusual, extraordinary and controversial words and phrases appearing in the final text he had prepared. He had several glossaries which he had prepared while working on the text and interrogating his sources of information. He intended to make these lists the foundation or starting point for the dictionary, and he thought he could complete it in two years. But he abandoned the idea after the difficulties he met in getting the text published, the misbehaviour of Baqir and the indifference shown by the Punjabi scholars. He believed that when the epic itself had failed to attract the attention of the *literati*, who would be interested in the meanings, constructions, symbols, usages and background of the actual words used in it.

The second book he wanted to write was more literary and ambitious. It aimed at studying *Hir* in the context of world literature. He would first look closely at the inspirations, themes, contents, issues and qualities of four or five classical epics of the West, and then through comparing

Hir with them demonstrate that Waris Shah's work was of equal stature. As he knew English, French, German and Italian and had been for 40 years reading European poetry he was well placed to attempt such a study.

He made fairly detailed notes on the planned book and even wrote the first tentative draft of the three opening chapters. He was writing in English. On one of my visits from Khartoum I suggested that he should write in Urdu so that the Punjabis could gain from it. With a sigh he replied, "This was my intention. But the Punjabis who took no notice of my *Hir* will have no interest in the book. I am aiming at a European readership. I want to show and convince the Western scholars and learned classes that at least one of our own poets is as great as their greatest. The Punjabis do not deserve this kind of a book. They have forgotten their own language and culture." Unfortunately, his age and lack of resources stopped him from pursuing the project. He had drafted three chapters when he passed away. I was not in the country, and my eldest sister and her family failed to look after or preserve his papers. All that he had written, along with the notes, was lost.

In early 1964 I wrote to him from Khartoum requesting information on the history of our family and his own life to be used for writing the prolegomena to my autobiography. Though he was then over 80 with a weak eyesight and a slight tremor in his hands, he was gracious enough to send me a lot of details in several long handwritten letters. In the last one, dated 16 March 1964, he wrote, "Wherever you mention me, after giving an account of my research on the Mughals, you must record that in my own estimation my work on *Hir* is, in comparison, of greater quality and higher status". The letter was in Urdu and this sentence ran as follows: "*Jahàn méra zikr ayé méri Mughlia daur par kitàbon kà tazkirah karné ké ba'd yé zarur kehna kéh méri apni nazar mén Hir kà kàm in sab kitàbon ké muqàbilah mén bàlàtar aur buland pàya haĩ*".

In our last meeting in June 1970 he said to me, "I know I told you this many years ago. But I want to say it again because it is that important. I gave every ounce of my talent and health to my work on *Hir*. But all my exertions would have gone waste without the encouragement your mother gave and the sufferings she bore. With every passing year I have realized more clearly how much I owed to her. It was her inspiration that blessed my work. She was, in every moral sense, my co-author. The *Hir* was as much hers as mine. Remember that all your life."

I left him with tears in my eyes – tears in memory of my mother and in honour of my father, both great in their own way and manner.

In the last 12 years of his life father saw many of his close relatives leaving this world. The first to die was *Mami* Bali on 30 April 1958 at 3.45 P.M. after four days of acute pain. On 2 July Dr. Muhammad Sharif, his niece's husband, died. In October Dr. Ghulam Jilani, Bibi Sardaran's husband, died in Lahore.

On 14 July 1961 Abdul Wahid, husband of his cousin Firoz, died in Peshawar. On 28 January 1963 his darling cousin, friend and benefactor, Hakim Jan, died of a heart attack in Lahore. On 30 November of the same year Akbar Husain, the younger son of Azizuddin and Sharfo, died in Peshawar. In the same year Bibi Sardaran joined her lovely dead daughters in a better world. On 1 March 1964 he lost his sister and playmate of childhood, Allah Rakhi. On 14 September 1968 *Manma* Majid died in Lahore, and on the following day father's nephew, Muhammad Hasan, in Karachi. On 16 December 1969 Fida Husain, son of Allah Rakhi, and one of my father's younger confidants, died in Lahore. On 7 October 1970 his cousin Firoz, daughter of Ghulam Muhammad, passed away.

All his contemporaries and many of his juniors now lay in the grave. He had lived long enough to complete his life's

work and also see his dear ones depart one by one. He was ready to sleep his last sleep and wake to life immortal. The call came at midnight between 15 and 16 December 1970. Zainab must have been ecstatic at the everlasting reunion.

A PORTRAIT OF THE MAN

In the above pages I have sketched an outline of my father's life and career. It is now time to paint in the shades and colours, attempt a portrait and make the man come alive.

In physique he was of medium stature, like his father, with a broad chest and a strong body. His long daily walk and regular callisthenics gave him a sturdy frame. He had a thin head of hair with a patch of baldness in the centre of the cranium. In the photographs of his days in England he is wearing a pince-nez, and as long as I can remember he used spectacles for reading and later also for all purposes. He was colour-blind, a striking liability in a professor of fine arts. His complexion was fairish, his eyes small and his forehead broad. In proportion to his body and size he had large hands with long fingers, our family indicia. He suffered from chronic common cold, which explains his thinning hair and weak eyesight but certainly not his capacity to work hard and long all his life. In the last 6 or 7 years he had a slight tremor in his hands.

At home he wore a collar-less shirt and pyjamas. He used to wear *salwar*, but that was before my time. He never left the house (except on Friday for the congregational prayers) in clothes worn indoors. Till 1947 he went to bed in a sleeping suit of British manufacture, decorated with vertical coloured stripes. When the import of these suits stopped, which coincided with the decline in his income, he adopted the habit of sleeping in shirt and pyjamas.

He always wore western dress, be it winter or summer. In his good times he patronized only one shop in Lahore for

choosing the cloth and ordering the cutting, designing and stitching of suits. This was Ranken and Co., situated at the corner of the Mall and Beadon Road. It was expensive but produced impeccably cut clothes. When he could not afford to shop there he found a native but excellent tailor in Dhani Ram Street, which connects Anarkali with the gate of the King Edward Medical College. Sirajuddin, the master craftsman, designed and sewed well. For his shirts he went to Balmoody, an English establishment on the Mall near Charing Cross, who was an expert in tailoring English shirts with separate stiff collars. He bought his ties, all of woven silk, from Ranken, and had a stock generous enough to last him till old age confined him to home. He never wore a bush shirt, no matter how hot the weather.

I have not seen anyone else observe the meal times that he did. The seasons determined what he ate and when. In summers he had his early breakfast, a noontime lunch, a glass of sherbet (mostly of sandalwood) in the afternoon, and dinner after sunset. In winters he gave up the breakfast in favour of a full lunch at 9.30 A.M, had the afternoon tea at 3.30 P.M., and then the usual dinner. The change over of the timings took effect on 15 April and 15 October, with the same strict punctilio as the seasonal uniforms of the armed forces, the police and the railway services.

There was a logic behind this unusual practice, and it was dictated by his work. The object was to extract out of nature's diurnal round as many working hours as possible, and at the same time have a siesta in summers. Winter days are short, and if three meals are taken at proper intervals there is not enough time left for work. Therefore breakfast and lunch were combined. Summer days are long and demand a rest after lunch, therefore the lunch was in order but the afternoon tea was abolished. He did not like having tea twice a day.

What he ate and in what order was as singular as when he ate. In winter, the brunch consisted of *roti* and a pulse

dish, the afternoon tea of 3 buttered toasts and 3 cups of tea, and the dinner of just one meat dish. In summer, the afternoon tea took the place of breakfast, lunch was composed of the meat dish, and dinner of one lentil dish. He ate only two kinds of pulses, *moong* and *mash* by daily rotation. Till 1947 two or three dishes were prepared, but he ate only one according to his schedule. He regarded it harmful for health to eat meat twice a day. A sweet dish after every meal was an essential part of the menu. Earlier the cooks used to make a variety of English puddings; occasionally my mother cooked rice in *gur* (brown lump sugar) or *mutanjan* (sweet rice with meat) or *gajréla* (grated carrots cooked in milk and sugar). To these were later added vermicelli, carrot *halva*, *churi* (*roti* mixed with ghee and sugar) and *jalébis* in milk. If no dessert was available he ate one *roti* with white or brown sugar mixed with ghee. He also relished *parathas* stuffed with minced mutton or radish (*muli*) or mashed potatoes, all with chopped onions.

The consumption of what he ate was finely measured, with no variation. Three toasts at breakfast or afternoon tea. Three *rotis* at each meal, but freshly made and still hot from the griddle. A pot of heated *ghee* (clarified butter) was poured over the pulse on his plate. In winter there was a stool next to the dining table on which stood a brazier and on it a cup-shaped vessel containing *ghee*; one or two teaspoons of ghee were poured on the pulse 2 or 3 times during the meal. Three pieces of meat or two minced meatballs (*koftas*) were the standard ration on meat mealtimes. Among vegetables he ate all kinds except aubergine or eggplant, but preferred *karélas*, ladyfingers, spinach and mustard leaves (*sarson ka sag*). He never ate pulse cooked in a lot of water (*patli dal*). Cucumbers were *de règle*, but not *tar*. Of fruits, he liked mangoes, melons, honey melons (of Peshawar or Kabul), and peaches.

Till the end of our Batala days the summer breakfast was a mouth-watering demonstration of variety: egg and *paratha*, *kulcha* with yoghurt, *halva* and *puri*, one bread-and-butter day intervening between each of these delicacies. *Murabbas* of various varieties, mostly of apple and carrot, were always available and some of us preferred them to bread and butter. Father had a portion of apple *murabba* every morning on an empty stomach. In summers he occasionally liked roasted corn-on-the-cob after lunch. He relished home-made cheese. My mother made it for him, and it was the only item of food which he learnt how to make from her, and often made it till his last years.

Ordinary white boiled rice was only eaten when someone had an upset stomach. Meat pilau was occasionally prepared.

His finicality and fastidiousness in cuisine were best demonstrated at tea times. There was no factory-made sliced bread in those days; the loaf came from the bakery. Regardless of the number of servants he prepared his toast himself. The ritual was long and lovingly carried out. He cut one slice off the loaf with a special long knife with a bone handle. The action was so precise that the slice was neither thick nor thin, nor misshapen nor deformed. Next to the dining table was a stool with a brazier containing smokeless hot coals. The slice was toasted on an old style hand toaster made of intersecting thin iron bars with a handle. When the slice was brown enough to his liking he took it off the toaster, scraped off the black or burnt or over-toasted edges. If he found that some area of the slice was under-toasted, back went the slice on the toaster. After this alternate toasting and scraping the bread was buttered and eaten. Then the second slice was cut off the loaf and given the same treatment. And then the third. All the three slices were not cut off the bread at one time, lest the exposed side might turn stale.

While he was eating his toasts he poured a little boiling water into the teapot, swirled it around to warm it and emptied the pot. Then he put into it a certain quantity of tea-leaves, and the servant was ordered to bring the kettle containing the boiling water and fill the teapot. His strict order was that the water for the tea should be boiled on a smokeless fire till the liquid at the bottom came to a boil, and the kettle should at once be brought to him; under-boiled or over-boiled water spoilt the aroma of the tea. A timepiece in a wooden case stood on the dining table. He let the tea brew for exactly three minutes, keeping an eye on the clock. Then he stirred the tea inside the pot, waited another full minute to bring out the proper colour, poured some milk in the teacup, and then poured the tea on to it. Sugar was added to the cup at the last stage. He used to say that he had seen tea being prepared in this manner in the homes of the English aristocracy.

He loved tea, and counted a good taste in tea as one of the essential marks of a man or woman of culture. After my marriage he was heartily pleased to find that my wife not only liked tea but was discriminating. The world changed, time passed, year succeeded year, our financial condition deteriorated, he became old, but the tea ceremony with its prescribed procedure and due order changed not a whit in our home.

After coming to Lahore in 1942 he developed a new taste or rather a new way of eating a cake. Once a week he began to eat a slice of a plain cake in the place of one of his three toasts. He gave the cake the same treatment as the bread, slicing it into pieces, toasting one piece, buttering it and eating it. When he was in a generous mood one slice was given to each child. I have not seen or heard of this way of eating toasted and buttered cake. My wife and I liked it so much that we lost no time in adopting it. Even now we occasionally have our cake in this ancestral tradition. In more recent years we had to give up the butter

but we still toast the cake, and remember him. And when we offer toasted and buttered cakes to our friends and visitors they are taken by surprise and we have to tell them who first conceived the idea of this luxury.

Partly because of its fine taste and partly because of its free supply from Kabul dry fruit was always eaten a lot in our family. My father liked it but even here he stood by his principle of rationing and balance. While the rest of the family ate all varieties of it at all times of the day, he adopted the following practice. Only almonds, pistachios, sultanas, pine-nuts (*chalghozas*) and coconuts had the privilege of attracting his attention. He would choose the best carefully, discarding the broken ones, slice the coconut into thin pieces, and mix up the ingredients to make a delectable melange. Only as much of it was prepared as would file a medium size glass jar which must have a plastic or tin lid to keep it airtight. This carefully prepared treat was eaten only after dinner in winter and in a measured quantity. When he was in a good mood or wanted to bestow a favour on us my sister and wife and myself were asked to share it with him. Only when the jar was empty was a refill prepared lest a larger quantity might get stale and lose its original taste. This continued till five years before his death.

His principle of rationing everything he consumed also applied to smoking. After his tea he smoked three cigarettes within an hour and a half. The first brand that I saw him smoking was Marcovitch's Black and White, which only came in round tins of 50s with vertical black and white stripes on the label pasted around them. As his income fell so did the quality and make of the cigarettes. From Black and White he descended to Craven A, and finally to Capstan. But no matter which brand was in use the number of cigarettes he smoked remained stationary. The same principle applied to cigars. He smoked one a day, and that after the meal which consisted of a

meat dish. He failed to establish a connection between cigar and a lentil dish. He always smoked South American Corona cigars. When they were not available or he could not afford them he took to the pipe, using a light perfumed tobacco which wafted its pleasant sweet smell throughout the room.

Another of his unusual habits should be mentioned. Once a week, on the Sunday, he had a day off, not only from work but all normal weekday activities and functions. He did not exercise, ate no egg, drank no tea, ate no meat, did not smoke, and did not shave. He said this was for the good of both body and mind. It trained one in continuing to live a normal life without following the usual routine. The lesson learnt was that the fixed order can be suspended. Moreover, both body and mind received the rest they needed.

Evidently punctuality lay at the heart of such a regimented life. No self-imposed prescript can work without strict time management. But he took this undeviating lifestyle to its ultimate limit. He lived by the clock and soon became a timekeeper in himself. It has been reported that a European philosopher, perhaps it was Kant, set out and concluded his evening constitutional with such exact timing that people used to correct their watches by the progress of his walk. Father took this precision a step further. If one was living in another town or a different quarter of the same town, allowing for the change of season, one could look at his watch and declare confidently that now he was breakfasting, now sitting down to start his work, now smoking his third cigarette, now ready to go for his walk. I personally know of two of our cooks receiving their marching orders because the dinner or lunch was served ten minutes late. If a visitor arrived at an inconvenient hour he would talk to him for 2 or 3 minutes and then tell him to sit with the rest of the family as he was busy. Everyone knew of his habits and dedication to time, he was the direct descendant of the venerable makers of the

family, he was rich, and senior in age to all his cousins except the two sons of Azizuddin, and therefore everyone respected him and did not protest or complain.

My honour, respect and sympathy for my mother increases many fold when I come to think that she looked after and lived happily with a man of such pedantry, rigour and primness.

One of the inalterable laws of his life was a long evening walk. It lasted two hours and covered 5-6 miles, depending on the terrain. For this walk he had special full boots made to order. I once asked him why he wore them, and he explained, "The ground outside the town and amid fields and also on the roads and streets without footpaths is not level or even. The feet are held tight in these boots and it is safe to walk or even stumble. Besides, they protect the ankles from the hazard of sprain. Moreover, they don't let the dust soil my socks and feet". A sensible solution of many problems.

A stick was a necessary accompaniment of the walk. In those days most men of all classes did not leave their home without a stick or a staff. Father put his pikestaff to many uses: removing sods and stones out of his path, scaring away dogs and cattle, supporting himself while crossing a rivulet or a hump or some other hurdle, and shooing away or killing snakes. He changed his stick hand every few minutes. On inquiry he explained that it was meant to distribute the stick's load evenly on both hands and also to let each arm swing with the walking movement.

He kept up this exercise till his legs refused to carry him on long distances. He was so particular about it that in rainy seasons I have seen him walking up and down the roof top or the courtyard for 90 minutes with his head wrapped in a towel and, in winters, wearing an overcoat. These extensive walks were one of the two secrets of his long and healthy life. The other will be mentioned shortly.

All this shows that discipline was the principal player in his life. He was the master of his habits, not their slave. He was in perfect control of his time, movements, schedule of work, eating and drinking hours, smoking practices, sleeping and waking hours, and of everything that he did as long as he lived. What other men considered normal he made into an obligation to himself. He ordered himself into a life where there were no departures from the norm, no dereliction of duties, no deviation from the routine, no deflection from the true purpose, no detours and by-paths, no diversions or wanderings, no shifts or swerves, no slack or aberration.

In many respects he could be called an automaton, but not in its derogatory or pejorative sense. The fuel that ran this human piece of machinery was passion for work and hunger of knowledge. Time was the essence of things, but not in or for itself. No passing moment should be allowed to elapse without contributing something useful or good to one's existence. Life is not a series or continuum of breaths, but an opportunity provided by the Maker of men to elevate the quality of one's life through moral and intellectual improvement. For others time was the hunter, for him it was the hunted.

This passion for gaining knowledge and doing useful work was what governed his life. He sowed much in the field of life; he also harvested much. He worked impossible hours; this did not kill him. He did what he wanted to do on this day; he did not wait for the morrow. The tomorrow never comes but in the imperative of today. Life is a gift of God to be spent in His service. Gaining knowledge is the only proper way to spend it. Intellectual work is not an option but a duty. Learning lights the way to God. If the lamp of enlightenment is lit in the heart it improves the inner vision. Then your own conscience becomes your touchstone. Life is not a right or a privilege to be used up in achieving mundane success, but a unique and once-only opportunity to try to seek a key to the secrets of destiny and fate.

The great end and gift of knowledge is self-sufficiency born of humility. That is what the Quran calls *faqr*, and classical philosophers and theologians of all religions have applauded it as a virtue true and sacred and pure. By this definition he was a fakir. He was born rich. Time and circumstance made him poor. He did not let that snuff out his ambitions. He did not look for rewards or trophies, recognition or compensation, recompense or tributes, praise or gain. His work was enough of an honour. It made him happy and contented. He laboured with an easy mind, he lived a happy life, he died a contented man. There is no greater gift in life than the recognition and realization of one's self. There is nothing more rewarding than to know and cultivate one's self, one's inner existence, the quiddity, prime constituent, soul, heart and core of life.

This was the philosophy by which he regimented his life. And next to his will power it was his wife who made it possible for him to lead the life he led. She understood his passion for work, appreciated his devotion to it, supported his efforts, and made supreme sacrifices for his sake.

He knew this and loved and honoured my mother for what she was. He was a good husband. He never caused her any trouble, consulted her on all important affairs, and often submitted to what she decided. Poverty is the most crucial test of human relationships. It scorches the closest of connections. Both he and she went through this trial without any weakening of their mutual love and respect. Both were tested on the touchstone of adversity, and both survived unharmed. Contentment and patience saved them. Both emerged from the test of adversity with their self-respect and mutual regard intact.

For me he was not just an affectionate father but much more. He was a beacon of light. He spent precious hours and unique knowledge on my upbringing, studies, character building and general instruction. Given his guidance and wisdom any other son would have lived up to his

expectations and emerged from the crucible of his training as pure gold. If I failed to achieve what I should have achieved it is entirely my incapacity, incompetence and inability.

But he did his best and introduced me to the pleasures of knowledge. The little that I have been able to do in life – and it is very meagre considering the mentor I had – is dust in the pan, but even this I owe to none but him.

The supreme quality of his character which saved him from a myriad troubles and gave him a long life was contentment of the highest order. Patience and forbearance were the two principal components of this contentment. He stood steadfast in the many storms amid which the barque of his life tossed and turned, floundered and undulated, lurched and wobbled. Adversities came his way like ripe fruits dropping from trees. Batala was gone. Many of his blood relatives and close friends died like autumn leaves. He lost his greatest gift from God, his wife. His daughter had to get a divorce. Poverty came and refused to leave. All this passed over him like a threatening cloud. He stood unmoving. Old age weakened his body, but not his resolve to live according to his wonted ways.

It was an endearing aspect of his character that he was easy to please. Small, ordinary things would catch his attention, win his approbation and make him glad. One day he was putting the drawstring in his pyjamas when my wife noticed this and immediately went to him, took away the string and the dress from him and said "This is not your job; I will do it". He was so happy as if she had done a favour to him. When I came home from the college he mentioned this to me with the remarks "How nice of her! You have a good wife. One just like your mother". Another day he was getting ready to go for his walk and was on the point of dusting his shoes when again Zarina saw him with one shoe in his hand and, leaving what she was doing, took it away from him, cleaned the pair and brought it to him.

He felt as if she had saved him from an arduous chore and thanked her so profusely that she was embarrassed.

I was his only son and it was my duty to do whatever was in my power to help and serve him. But he expressed his gratitude in such lavish and extravagant terms that I was put to shame. In September 1963 he was feeling unwell and I wrote to him from Karachi showing some anxiety and telling him that I would gladly send him the money he might need. He wrote back on 12 September, "I deeply appreciate your solicitude for my health and welfare which is so evident in every word of your letter. It proves conclusively your filial love and sympathy in my troubles. I can only say that I am proud of a son like you . . . . My kind regards to Zarrina."

When on 15 September I protested against his compliments which I said I didn't deserve, he replied on the 20th. using even stronger language, "Your letter of the 15th. Inst. Yes, I meant what I said in my last letter – every word. Tell me, what would you think of a boy who promises a free gift of Rs.500 p.m. to his father in case of need and means it. Wouldn't you call him a gem of filial love and generosity . . . . My kind regards and thanks to Zarrina. She is so kind and considerate."

What can one say in the face of this kindness?

On 16 January 1964, when I was in Khartoum, he wrote a letter showing several things: concern for my health, his pride on a good review of my first scholarly book, and his contentment with his life on his 80th. Birthday:

"Khurshid dear,

Yesterday I wrote a long letter to you complaining of your long silence and showing great anxiety and worry which filled my mind. Thinking that my previous letters had perhaps miscarried, being under-stamped, I procured a 90-paisa envelope and put my letter in it. When it was ready for posting, just at the last moment your letter of 11-1-1964 arrived and set my doubts at rest and gave me peace of mind.

For God's sake be more regular in correspondence and write to me oftener.

Two days ago our Radio spoke of your book in flattering terms and bestowed great encomiums on the merits and quality of your work. I am proud of you as a son. Please accept my congratulations.

I shall be just 80 years on the morning of 24th. Jan. 1964. I thank you for your congratulations and am thankful to God for having granted to me this long life, which has been *a happy one on the whole* [my italics].

I hope both of you are in good health.

Effetely yours,
Abdul Aziz"

My doctoral thesis at Manchester University written in 1959 had been published by Heinemann in November 1963 under the title of *Britain and Muslim India* and had been widely reviewed in Britain in flattering terms, but, craving to win a good opinion of my father, I had been requesting him to read the book and let me know how he found it. He had procrastinated. At last on 3 February 1964 he wrote to me (the letter was typed and full of misprints; the postscript was in his hand):

"Khurshid dear,

I am sorry to have been unable to comply with your request to give my opinion about your book. I have been so busy with correction and printing of books that I could not do so.

I have now looked into portions of your book. My general impression is very favourable.

Your rich vocabulary and eloquent way of putting things leave no room for improvement. It seems to me that you have succeeded in developing a style of writing English which appeals to one's mind and makes a lasting impression. For your discourse about Public Opinion and its definition and analysis in the early pages of your book strike me as excellent.

The art of writing lies not so much in what you have to say but in the manner in which you say it. Thoughts and opinions may differ but it is in the way of expressing them that counts – in a word, *style*.

I must say frankly that your style and command of the English language has come to me as a surprise. This command is the chief factor in the situation.

Your routine letters even after your return from England did not show any marked improvement in language or style. Therefore, when your book came I was not particularly anxious, as the subject did not interest me. But now that you have asked me repeatedly to read it and express my considered opinion, I looked into it and my opinion has undergone a radical change.

In attributing your attainments to my training, you are paying me a compliment which is as unnecessary as it is undeserved. Your achievement and development are all due to your own efforts, patient study and diligent research.

You have developed a good style. A style, as you know, is a thing of personal taste and can neither be taught nor learnt. Choice vocabulary and selection of exactly appropriate words constitute distinguishing marks of good writing. It is by that that a writer is judged. Natural and effortless flow of words is one of the signs of good writing. I must say that you have stood the test well.

Yours affectionately,
Abdul Aziz

P.S. I must say in the end that I am proud of you as a writer of good English.

Note: This letter is typed not by me, but by an amateur, who has made a mess of it.

I am very glad to hear of a favourable review of your book in *Times Literary Supplement*. Congratulations!"

For me this letter is more precious than all the reviews which appeared in Britain and the United States.

On 22 March 1964 I wrote to him in detail about our plan to visit Europe in the following month; Khartoum University had its summer vacations from end of March to early July. His reply of 30 March was interesting:

"Khurshid dear,

Your letter of the 22nd. Inst. reached me all right. I am very glad that you have received first batch of Family History Notes. I must say, however, that I read your letter with mixed feelings.

On the one hand I was delighted to read your magnificent programme of travel and sightseeing. I consider it rare good luck to have such a splendid itinerary of visiting such towns and cities and seeing buildings of such historical and classical interest. I must say that you will be making the best use of your vacation. I am glad to learn of your desire to brush up your French. But a fortnight in Paris is much too short a time for the purpose. Your programme is of fascinating interest. I wish I could accompany you. But where is the luck? Where is the health? And where is the money? A mad desire is the only asset I possess.

But there is a dark side to the picture too. After you wrote this letter you must have received my Iliad of Woes, and must have been greatly upset by my demand for money, which, even if you try only partly to satisfy, will adversely affect your programme and spoil your enjoyment. And the sense that I am responsible for it grieves me beyond description. And there is nothing to soothe me. Only an unexpected stroke of good luck can put things right.

After finishing this letter so far I received your letter of the 25th. Thanks.

Remember me to Zarrina.

Effetely yours,
Abdul Aziz"

I removed his anxiety by promising to meet his demands. The reader will have noticed that in all his letter he punctiliously sent his regards to my wife; and the purist that he was, always spelt her name as it should have been, with a double "r".

The greatest shock he received towards the end of his life was the misbehaviour of his nephew and son-in-law, Ahmad Hasan. He was the son of one of his older sisters, Fatima. Her husband, Khairuddin, was a wastrel and idler, and lived all his life on an allowance from Ghulam Nabi. All his four sons were educated by my father and my uncle Hamid; three of them were married to girls from Ghulam Nabi's family. Three of them got government jobs at the time of a severe recession and unemployment through the influence of my uncle and father.

One of these boys lived with my father in Lahore for some years, was educated at the Government College to the B.A. level, and fixed up as a clerk in the office of the Indian Railway Board in Delhi. Then my eldest sister, Akhtar, was married to him. He was given all the respect due to a son-in-law in our society. As long as father's money lasted he supported him with an allowance equal to his salary.

Father lived with him and Akhtar for 2 or 3 years in the late 1960s, not long before his death. He was not dependent on them in terms of money. At his age he just wanted to be looked after, cared for, treated with sympathy and shown some love. All these were denied to him. He paid his own way with the money I sent him from Khartoum. It was not much, but even from this Ahmad Hasan asked for one-half as a contribution to the kitchen expenses. The situation is unimaginable. An 81-year old widower is living with his daughter whose husband owes everything in life to him. There are five grown-up children in the house and one servant. Eight persons are fed everyday, but there is no free food for the father. He has to pay for it. My father does not

protest and pays his share, and manages in what is left to him to meet all other expenses including medicines.

Had Ahmad Hasan's meanness stopped there my father would have accepted it as one more of the tribulations of his life. But things got worse. Father was given the darkest and smallest room to sleep in. His bathroom was not cleaned every day. His clothes were not washed regularly. The last straw was the son-in-law's instruction that father should not use the commode provided in the bathroom, but go out to the latrine built at the side of the bungalow. He was too weak to squat or crouch as the latrine required, but nobody bothered. The house in which the family was living was a 6-bedroom large bungalow on Sarwar Road in the cantonment with spacious verandas and lawns on all four sides. Ahmad Hasan had arranged its allotment to himself as compensation for his late father's property left behind in Amritsar which didn't have the value of even a garage.

Soon afterwards, finding that he could not cope with his living conditions and insulting behaviour, father moved to my second sister's house on Poonch Road, where he died before long.

The treatment meted out to him by his own daughter and nephew was unforgivable, vitiated and debased all ethical and human values and made a mockery of our family's traditions. If anything broke the heart of my father, which had remained unbroken by all other reverses of life, it was Ahmad Hasan's misbehaviour. He was not used to complain, but he abandoned his lifelong restraint when I visited him during this period. Without being sentimental or getting emotional he said to me, " I could not imagine Ahmad Hasan of all the people to treat me like this. I have never harmed him". Then he gave me some details which I have mentioned above. That is all. He did not refer, even by a hint, what *he* had done for his son-in-law. I was shocked. I had known by then that Ahmad Hasan could be arrogant,

supercilious, petty, selfish and pompous when he chose. But this was plain, simple, blatant and brazen-faced meanness. I beseeched father to come with me to Khartoum and live with us. He smiled, said "at this age and in my health", and thanked me. It took me a few days to recover from what I had been told.

When I wrote a short biography of father in Cambridge in 1997-98 I referred to this sad episode in just three lines, which was a very muted statement of what I had seen myself and been told by father. I circulated copies of the book among the family, but deliberately did not send any to Ahmad Hasan's children (he had died in 1979, and his wife in 1995). But I did give a copy to Ahmad Hasan's younger brother, Jamil Hasan. He read it with interest, pointed out a serious misprint, complimented me on having written a good book, and, laughingly, even said that a mention of his own family would have pleased him.

Over a year later he met me on an occasion related to a death in the family. He was a changed man. He took me by the arm, led me to some chairs in an untenanted corner of the lawn and lectured to me for a quarter of an hour on my unforgivable crime in writing those three lines about his brother. He upbraided me for being rude to my elders, insulting his brother, hurling abuses at him after his death, and being a bad Muslim for speaking ill of the dead. I did not utter a word during this ill-tempered harangue. When he stopped, frothing at the mouth, I said, "*Bhai sahib*, I wrote what my father told me. Are you calling him a liar after he is dead?" He replied, "I can't say anything. But my brother could not have done this", got up and walked away. This made me angry. But I was also amused. He was behaving just like his own father who never showed any gratitude to Ghulam Nabi on whom he had sponged all his life. History was repeating itself.

The most eminent proof of father's contentment was his reaction to the loss of Batala. Measured by any yardstick this

was the most stupendous tragedy to befall my family. Though my mother had said that we had been turned into permanent exiles and homeless refugees, and I fully shared this sentiment (even more than she), for my father it was not just a matter of losing a home. Our ancestral home had been Kahnuwan and we had lived there for generations and centuries. It was the cradle of the clan. But when we abandoned it we did so out of free choice and brought our wealth with us. When we left Batala we were like a corpse being carried to the graveyard, very dead and with both hands empty. The loss was as sharp as the edge of a sword and as cutting. All we had was gone, our world came tumbling down over our head, our destiny changed, our life transformed.

This was the greatest ordeal faced by father, a critical moment, a crucial test of his powers of self-abnegation and contentment. Homelessness and poverty came hand in hand, laughing our plight to scorn. The hour was dark, the loss unbearable, the life a tumult. Amid these ruins and shards of his existence he stood like a rock of granite. After this cataclysm he passed 23 years and 4 months on this earth. Not even once did I hear him cursing his fate, complaining of his sufferings, whining or muttering, or even talking nostalgically about Batala. It was as if a door had been shut behind him and he thought it futile to turn his head and look back towards it.

He had nothing in front of him but a wreckage, a wilderness, a scene of devastation, a vacancy, a vacuum. There was no house to live in, no books to look at with pride, no native land to call one's own, nothing with roots in the past. But the beat of his heart remained steady. Instead of sulking, brooding, groaning, moaning and moping, he looked forward to the progress his work was making. Anyone else in his place would have bored his visitors and all around him with stories of his family's departed greatness and all that was left behind in Batala.

The tidal waves on the surface of the sea are strident and uproarious and in incessant motion, their stormy surface never still. But at the bottom lies the shell in perfect repose, and in it the pearl with its unique splendour. My father was that shell, his heart the pearl. Tempests may rage outside, tumults may ruin his life, but inside, in his nerves and temper, there was a hush of peace. The only time when I saw the crust near to cracking was when, once or twice a year, at seeing a rare book or borrowing an old, precious volume from the library, he would address me and say "I had this one in Batala". For a few fleeting seconds his lips trembled. The sadness passed as quickly as it had come, and he began to talk of other things. All of us carry our cross. A man is tested by how he carries his.

I want to give the reader a short account of the library he lost in Batala, for two reasons. First, a man is known by the books he buys and owns and reads and the friends he makes and keeps. Secondly, the contents of the library will indicate its value and therefore the enormity of its loss.

To take a general view the collection was the work of four generations. But three contributions were rather slight. Waziruddin was not a well-read man and nobody knows the level of his formal education. But he was fond of reading classical Persian poets and Punjabi literature. It is a little-known fact that thousands of Punjabi books in prose and verse were published in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, most of them on religion, poetry and history. Waziruddin had acquired about a hundred of them, which my father had refused to get rebound, saying that his grandfather had handled these covers and they should be preserved as they were. They were carefully placed in satin covers (*ghilafs*) and stored on the top shelf of one of the cupboards. Occasionally they were taken out of their covering and exhibited to me, my mother and *Manma* Majid. Father ran his hands over the original binding as if

venerating a sacred relic. I was allowed to touch them softly under strict supervision and told not to press hard on them.

Then there were about two hundred volumes of Persian and Urdu poetry belonging to my mother's father, Ghulam Qadir. He had been a lover of oriental poetry all his life and on his retirement from Dodhi brought his collection to Batala. On his death his wife had passed them on to Ghulam Nabi who added them to his library.

I was the fourth contributor with my personal library of about 500 books and magazines. I bought my first book in Lahore in 1936 under father's supervision. After that he persuaded me to spend at least half of my pocket money on books, and he bought some for me when he visited Lahore and we were in Batala. My small collection consisted mostly of books on literature, some biographies, a few novels, and a nearly complete set of children's books and the *Phool* magazine issued by Sayyid Imtiaz Ali Taj's publishing firm in Lahore. Later when I joined the college in 1942 father opened a credit account of Rs. 50 in my name at Messrs. Rama Krishna, just as his father had done for him in 1900. Most of what I bought I took to Batala in the next holidays. Their loss in 1947 was my first bibliophilic suffering.

The founder of the library was Ghulam Nabi. He was a serious and voracious reader and had the means to buy whatever he liked. Like Waziruddin he was a collector of Persian classical poetry and of Punjabi literature. The Aligarh movement and Sayyid Ahmad Khan's ideas appealed to him. He began to subscribe to *Tahzib-ul-Akhlaq* and acquire the Sayyid's writings and tracts, and everything concerned with his Muhammadan Educational Conference and other associations and societies. He also bought books of English fiction, history and medicine, translations of the Quran, collections of *hadith*, Punjabi classical and popular stories, etc. On his death in 1926 he left about 5,000 volumes.

The chief builder of the library was my father. He had bought some books while in England, his first acquisition in the field of knowledge. After his return he became a regular and insatiable collector. Money was no problem. There were no foreign exchange barriers. He purchased and ordered anything that appealed to him. There were hundreds of books in French, German and Italian besides English, Arabic, Persian, Urdu and Punjabi. The careful scholar that he was, he bought many dictionaries, lexicons, grammars, glossaries, atlases, companions to the studies of every European language he knew, and other reference books. There was the greater *Oxford English Dictionary* in its multi-volume magnificence, the 1912 edition of the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, the 32-volume glorious *Historians' History of the World*, and several other sets. Then there were long runs of several British and French journals. In keeping with his catholic tastes the collection covered languages, literature, history, philosophy, economics, fine arts, religion and some other fields. The total count was about 25,000 volumes.

To this published material was added the far more precious and irreplaceable archives of the family. Waziruddin had begun the practice of keeping family records and papers. He had separate registers for marriages, births and deaths. Ghulam Nabi updated them and father continued the tradition. Knowing that valuable papers and documents were safe in the Batala haveli, the whole of the extended family made it a practice to lodge their documents in our library. Over the years the archival material covered genealogical trees, registers of all kinds of records, marriage contracts, rolls, registers and title deeds of purchase and sale of properties, account books, papers relating to Ghulam Nabi's employment in Bahawalpur and Kabul, diplomas, degrees, medals, medical prescriptions, etc., etc. It was the only repository of the clan which was considered to be absolutely safe.

An equally precious part of the archives was the correspondence going back to the later years of Waziruddin's life. He had kept the letters he had received. Later Ghulam Nabi initiated the improved system of keeping copies of the letters he wrote; in early years when there were no typewriters he had a scribe who copied out every outgoing letter. Father added to this treasure the whole of his correspondence which, thanks to his natural carefulness and a historian's instinct and training, contained not only letters but every slip of paper or note received by him, going back to his days in England.

By a happy chance in August-September 1946, our last vacation spent in Batala, father decided that I should be initiated into the art of keeping and preserving letters. To give a practical demonstration of the rules of the practice he opened the safe, took out scores of bundles, untied most of them, and showed me the letters he had received (and some that he had written) from his friends, teachers and colleagues. He wanted me to know his friends, and with this in view let me read a few letters. I had then just graduated and had some understanding of the great worth of epistolary sources. Now he showed me how to treat a letter, to take it out of its envelope gently, to unfold it with delicate care, handle it as if it were a frail object, even to turn over the sheet softly and patiently, and after reading it to repeat the whole operation in reverse with the same caution.

As I write from memory, and this happened 60 years ago, I cannot provide a list of all the names of the correspondents. Some of them were very close to father, or I heard him talking much about them in later years, or I met them afterwards, or something inexpressible about their names or their letters left a deep impression on my mind. The clasp of memory still holds their names: Sayyid Ameer Ali, Iqbal, Sir Thomas Arnold, Sir Abdul Qadir, Sir Abdullah al-Mamun Suhrawardy, Sir Sultan Ahmad, R.A.

Nicholson, Sir Muhammad Azizul Haq, Hafiz Mahmud Khan Shirani, Akhtar Shirani, Aftab Iqbal (Iqbal's older son), Abdullah Yusuf Ali, Maulavi Muhammad Shafi, Mian Abdul Aziz Falakpaima, Chaudhri Sir Shihabuddin, Raja Narendranath, Sayyid Ghulam Bhik Nairang, Sardar Kapur Singh, Sir Fazl-i-Husain, Mian Afzal Husain, Muhammad Asadullah (librarian, Imperial Library, Calcutta), Nawab Maula Bakhsh, Sir Shafaat Ahmad Khan and Nawab Bahawal Khan Abbasi. There were also a few letters addressed to Ghulam Nabi by the Nawab of Bahawalpur, King Habibullah of Afghanistan and King Amanullah. The largest bundles contained letters from Shirani, Abdul Qadir, Abdullah Yusuf Ali, Shihabuddin and Shafaat Ahmad Khan.

It can well be imagined how greatly the loss of this library and the archives must have shocked and saddened my father.

Perhaps the most outstanding feature of father's character was independence. Once again it came partly from blood (Ghulam Nabi's entire life from his school years in Batala to his last days had been an exercise in depending on himself) and partly from his early English training (the British public school system, the real creator of the world-girdling empire). Mother used to tell me how, in spite of the money he had, the family background of affluence and the number of servants in the house, he would like to meet many of his daily needs by himself. I didn't ask her for details, but I can illustrate the habit from what I saw with my own eyes from 1935 onwards and can recall.

Dusting and cleaning of books, refilling his fountain pen with ink, cutting and slicing the quire of paper to the various sizes he required, sharpening his pencils, taking out of the shelves and putting back of books and journals, looking after his typewriter, and so many other similar chores connected with his work were done by him. The most surprising demonstration of self-reliance came after

1936 when his valet fell a prey to retrenchment because of our financial condition. Havelis had no attached bathrooms and dressing rooms were as rare as a polar bear in the great sahara. When we moved to Batala he had both the conveniences built out of one end of a long veranda. Apart from dusting the room the servants had nothing to do with his wardrobe work.

He became his own valet, did not complain of the absence of one, and everything went well to his satisfaction. He aired and brushed his suits and other clothes, replenished the accessories, washed the shaving gear, etc. He depended on others only for sewing on loose buttons of his shirts, pressing the trousers, washing his shirts and sleeping suits, and polishing his shoes. On returning from outside visits he unlaced his shoes or boots and took off his socks. These are ordinary everyday things which one doesn't notice doing. But if somebody else has been doing it for you for 30 years it is not easy to learn new chores. He did quite easily and smoothly. Later, in Lahore after my mother's death, he became even more self-sufficient. He put the drawstring into the pyjamas, even taught himself to use thread and needle. He carried his things from one room to another and cleaned out his bookshelves.

One day I was cycling on Fateh Sher Road, which connects Bahawalpur Road and Lytton Road, when I saw him coming from the opposite direction on foot. I stopped and asked from where he was coming. Quite nonchalantly and as if he did it everyday he said he had gone to the Mozang main bazaar to get a tooth extracted. Just like that. No song and dance about it. Not even a mention. No use of anaesthesia. No need of a *tonga* to go home in. He was then 73.

Most sons fasten upon their fathers as their ideals. So do I. But I won't hold that he was perfect. He was a man of rare virtues and great qualities of mind and heart. But no man born of a woman is perfect, and my father's own sense

of integrity and the historian's impartiality would have protested against painting a portrait without the contrasting colours. He had his weaknesses, and a reference to them will not condemn him to be reckoned as less than a man. On the contrary, it will present him as what he really was – a human being, however extraordinary.

First the minor chinks in his armour and the unattractive habits. He was incapable of suffering fools, not even if they happened to be in possession of some good qualities. He expected everyone who wanted to gain his acquaintance to be of the same intellectual standard as he himself was. He could also be stubborn if he chose to, though this might harm his own prospects and create difficulties for his wife, as it did on several occasions. He resigned from the Islamia College professorship and declined the offer from the Anglo-Arabic College in spite of my mother's warning and contrary advice. He refused to approach any of his influential friends to get his claim of property settled to his advantage, or to take possession of an abandoned, empty house and get the matter regularized later on (as did several thousand people in Lahore who were not even refugees).

He was short sighted and other-worldly in money matters; an innocent who suffered much for being that. He was living in a society, especially after 1947, which was ruled by considerations of wealth, prosperity, material advancement and by no other criterion or value. He should have realized this. He did not while he could mend matters. When he did, the roof had already fallen over his head, and it was too late.

There was a slight element of arrogance in his character. At time he behaved as a social superior. Oddly this attitude showed up more conspicuously in his eating preferences and prejudices than in his treatment of people. Certain kinds of food were barred from the dining table because they were considered as fit for consumption only by the lower classes, e.g., aubergines, pulse or lentil cooked

in a lot of water (*patli dal*), inferior varieties of lemons and peaches, tamarind, *tar* and peanuts. He took punctuality and time management with deadly seriousness, as if it were a creed and not a matter of personal convenience. The dismissal of a cook for serving his dinner late is understandable. But to start eating without waiting for the invited guests beyond the grace time of 10 minutes is not. So was his refusal to entertain unscheduled visitors beyond 5 minutes on the ground that he was busy in his work or it was time for his daily walk.

The trouble was that he expected everyone else to lead a life as unsparing and self-controlled as his own. He had learnt it from his father and his English education at an unusually young age. Others did not have had these advantages or opportunities. In a way one could say he was anti-social. Yes, he was unsociable, but certainly not a misogynist. He did not visit many people frequently. He felt awkward in large gatherings and was not a good mixer. He was retiring by disposition. He was at ease only in his small family circle or his close friends. He preferred his cloistered life to *savoir vivre* and conviviality. I think basically he was a shy man. I wouldn't even baulk at using the term "loner" for him, but in the lexical not psychiatric sense.

In the use of language and other intellectual activities and interests he was a purist, even finicky, pedantic, over-cautious and over-careful to an irritating degree. When he wanted an authoritative, correct and incontrovertible explanation of a word or phrase or construction, in the case of a European language he would consult every dictionary in the libraries of Lahore and in his friends' private collections, and in the case of Persian and Arabic he took the problem to Shirani, Maulavi Umar and Maulavi Shafi and insisted on a unanimous verdict. This delayed his research and at times annoyed his friends, but he would justify it with impeccable academic arguments.

He was British in his behaviour, way of life and most of his habits. In my opinion this is hardly a drawback or a defect, but it created difficulties for himself and sometimes for others. The others suffered, for example, from his uncompromising concentration on his work and his Draconian punctuality. But to us in the family it seemed that he was punishing himself by living according to standards and conventions of an English gentleman of the first decade of the twentieth century.

Let me give you some examples of other than his punctuality and time management which I have already mentioned. In winters he wore 3-piece suits, and if a freakish change of weather made the end of March or early April too warm for a waistcoat he would neither dispense with the third piece nor take off his coat (in modern parlance jacket) in the classroom or in the street. *This is not done*, was his reply to every inquiry about his discomfort. Similarly, as in his days a gentleman in England would rather be seen dead than eating in the street, he rigidly adhered to the principle in Lahore regardless of the weather. In the height of summer he would go to the university or the library in a suit and a stiff collar and necktie, feel thirsty and miserable, but never go to a drink stall to quench his thirst.

Only once in 15 years (1942-57) he just couldn't stand his dry and parched throat and had a yoghurt drink at a shop while standing on the footpath. He mentioned this to me the moment he entered the house. Half an hour later he gave this earth-shaking news to my wife. In the next three days he must have referred to the outrage twenty times. We were young and smiled at the refrain. But his world had been shaken. For the first time in his life he had consumed something while standing in the street. He had broken a convention which should not have been breached. He had compromised his status as a gentleman. We may laugh at it, and sometimes we did, but imagine what it meant to him.

That is the sum of his imperfections that I can recall. They were not major faults of his character. Yet some disliked his treatment of them, some thought he considered himself a superior person, others believed that he leaned too much against his background. There was some resentment, some jealousy, much envy. But nobody ever said a word in his presence. I am sure he was not aware of the little waves he was creating. Given his character, had he known it wouldn't have made any difference to him.

What did make a difference to several lives in the family was his abnormal infatuation for his middle daughter, Razia. This feeling existed for as long as I have known. I became aware of it in Batala in 1937-42 when once or twice a year she came to us, complaining of her husband's treatment and refusing to return home. On all these occasions father sided with her, blamed her husband, Bashir, for the sour relationship, and was reluctant to send her back to Lahore. My mother took the opposite view, insisting that Razia was in the wrong, that petty domestic quarrels should not be made a pretext for leaving the husband, that she must go back. Ultimately every time she did go back, but the recurring problem worried my mother, and on one or two occasions she almost reprimanded my father for his showing too much indulgence to Razia.

Years passed, mother died, we had no home in which she could take refuge from her husband's alleged and mostly fabricated cruelties, and father had no money to give her to live apart. But her complaints did not cease and till the end she pretended to be the persecuted wife.

The truth is that her husband came from a poor family and she had a grudge against life because of this. Bashir was a quiet, submissive, unassertive, gentle person with two addictions, cricket and newspapers. Unwisely she poisoned all her children, the three daughters, against their father and made his old age difficult. He died in 1986.

The love between father and daughter affected my life too. Of my three sisters Razia alone was in favour of my marriage to Zarina and was firmly on my side. This partiality and support lasted but a few months after the wedding. Father had developed an immense liking for my wife. We were then living independently but only one street away from Razia's house, and she was a daily visitor. She noticed father's affection and fondness for Zarina and did not like it. One day in Razia's presence he said to me, "You are a very lucky man to have such a sweet wife. If I had set out to search for a suitable girl for you I could not have found a better one. Treat her tenderly and respect her as I respected your mother". For Razia it was like a bomb bursting at her doorstep. She was shocked by the revelation made by father himself. So his father's love was now shared by my wife. She could not allow that. Suddenly she turned from a sympathetic sister-in-law of Zarina's into a conventional spiteful mother-in-law, consumed with jealousy. She began to poison father against me and my wife. For some time his relations with me were clouded, a matter of great sorrow for me. Luckily soon after this Zarina and I left for England and on our return made our home first in Karachi and then in Khartoum, away from Razia. I try to but cannot forgive her for causing me the most grievous possible hurt by souring my relations with a gem of a father and also for hurting my wife and alienating father from her, however temporarily.

In fairness to my sister I must record here that her love for father was unselfish and boundless. The devotion with which she looked after him and served him like a slave during her last years was a gift of God to father. I was away in Khartoum, Kishwar alone could not have coped with the situation, and Ahmad Hasan and Akhtar were adding to father's agony in old age. At this critical time Razia's house and love were his only haven. He died at her house, in her care till the last breath he breathed.

HIS FRIENDS

For everyone, and especially those whose chief interest lies in literature and reading and writing books, friends are an important part of life, because they are more than friends. They are colleagues, companions, confidants, peers and kindred spirits. It is one of the more meaningful clichés that a man is known by his friends. It is also an unerring test of a man whether he can or cannot keep up his friendships for life.

I have already mentioned father's earliest friends made in England. Close relationship with them lasted till their death. I have also given an account of his friends in Batala. I will now fill in some blanks and provide some additional information derived from my personal knowledge.

During his stay in Lahore in 1934-37 the most frequent visitors were Abdullah Yusuf Ali, Mian Afzal Husain, Maulavi Muhammad Shafi, Hafiz Mahmud Shirani, Sir Shihabuddin and Sirajuddin Azar.

Abdullah Yusuf Ali was then principal of Islamia College. He lived in a suite of rooms on the first floor of the Nedou's Hotel on the Mall (the site now occupied by the Avari Hotel). He had divorced his first wife a long time ago and had strained relations with the second; both were English. So he was living alone in Lahore. He spent most of the Sundays at our house, lunching with father, and returned to the hotel late in the afternoon. He liked good food and was a discriminating eater. The hotel was highly Anglicized and probably did not serve Indian food. Anyhow he enjoyed our native cuisine. When a particular curry was to his taste he first summoned the cook and tipped him one rupee, and then told father that he wished to thank my mother personally. As she observed purda she came and stationed herself behind the half-open door of the dining room leading into the interior of the house, he stood near the door on the other side and said a few word of thanks in Urdu. Sometimes mother asked her what he would

particularly like to be cooked for him on the following Sunday. With his meals he always drank soda water.

I would always walk into the drawing room, *salam* him and stay there for a few minutes. I also visited the room four or five times during his stay; the growing child's natural curiosity about his father's visitors. One day when I was standing near the sofa chair in which he was sitting he caught hold of me and made me sit on his knees, kissed me on the forehead and said. "Your daddy is a great scholar. He reads many books. I pray that you grow up to be like him". He used to talk to me about his days in England in a language and on the level within my comprehension. To me he was an affectionate uncle; perhaps a bit too effusive because of his own most unpleasant family life.

He and father mostly talked in English. At times I heard them conversing in a strange language which I did not know, and later on my inquiry father said it was French. He was always well dressed in clothes bought in England. Other than Shaikh Abdul Qadir, he was the only friend to call father by his name and when talking to him in Urdu address him as *tum*. As he was senior to father by several years father always called him Mr. Yusuf Ali.

I accompanied father several times to the Nedou's Hotel. Abdullah Yusuf Ali's sitting room-cum-study was very large and opened on to the front veranda. It had a high ceiling and was cool and airy in summers. In the winter months a bright log fire burned in the grate, warming it to a pleasant degree. There were hundreds of books lying around on the floor, tables and even chairs. One windowsill was full of them. I noted that his table was unusually long and wide. Now I understand the reason: he was translating and annotating the Quran and needed a generous working area to have within reach all the books he required.

When he died a sad death in London on 10 December 1953 and father read of it in the newspaper of the following

day he was much grieved and was not his usual self for several days. During this mourning period he talked a great deal about him, the days they had spent together in England and India, and how much he had learnt from him. I still remember father saying that he had always regarded Longfellow as a poet of the second rank till Abdullah Yusuf Ali pointed out the finer qualities of his work.

Maulavi Muhammad Shafi had been R.A. Nicholson's student at Cambridge and now taught Arabic and Persian at the Oriental College. A man of wide learning, a master of the linguistic intricacies of Arabic and Persian and a scholar of extraordinary vigilance and application, he was often consulted by father on the difficulties he encountered with the Persian language. Father had great respect for him and always addressed him as "Maulavi sahib", never by his name. Shafi lived at the end of the Masson Road, off Queens Road, in his own house which seemed to be cramful of books. He was dressed in *achkan* and wore a bright red Turkish cap. He sported large moustaches with either end curved upwards. He rarely laughed and contented himself with a half-smile.

Chaudhri Sir Shihabuddin was unique, at least in the Punjab, for combining in his person petty feudal lordship and perceptive literary taste. By profession he was a lawyer. By race he was a *jat*, tall, very dark, ugly, sturdy, with thick hands and irregular features, but also a smile which compensated for all the handicaps. At home he wore a *tahband* and *kurta*, and spoke unadulterated, chaste and undefiled Punjabi.

He was a book collector of exceptional choice, range and taste and bought what he wanted. Both in size and quality his library was without a rival in north India. The books were selected as much for their outer elegance as for their inner worth. His collection of the various illustrated editions and translations of Firdausi's *Shah Nama* was the finest in the

subcontinent. His treasure of books in Punjabi and its literature was of the same rank. His collection of manuscripts of the Hir epic was unmatched and father made good use of it in his work. In fact it was the Chaudhri's passion for books in general and the *Hir* in particular which acted as a magnet between him and father. He was also a poet of some merit in Punjabi and had translated Altaf Hussain Hali' *Musaddas* and a few plays of Shakespeare into Punjabi verse. My father persuaded him to sell the more valuable portion of his collection to the Punjab University Library, which he did, and any visitor to the Shihabuddin Collection there can enjoy the glory of what he had acquired.

Father took me along with him several times on his visits to Shihabuddin's residence. He lived in a palatial house on Durand Road, next to the Queen Mary's School for Girls, which he had built for himself. In summers we sat in the luxuriously appointed drawing room on the ground floor. In winters he usually took us upstairs to a large rooftop with a deep veranda on one side of which were built several rooms opening out to the front of the house. We sat in the veranda to take advantage of the sun. He himself ensconced himself on a tall-legged *takhtposh* and put his back against a thick bolster. We were offered easy armchairs. And then he talked for hours of Punjabi literature and particularly *Hir* and read out some of his translations.

Shihabuddin's end was tragic. He had no issue, and in his lifetime he had gifted the house to Mian Mumtaz Muhammad Khan Daultana who was the son of his wife's sister. Daultana returned from Oxford with a degree in history in 1944 and at some time after this shifted Shihabuddin to an outhouse with one inattentive servant to look after him.. When father visited him in this room he came back with tears in his eyes. Shihabuddin was ill, but he died soon afterwards as much of physical infirmity as of a broken heart. Later Daultana rose to be a leading figure in

the Muslim League, and acted as chief minister of the Punjab and a federal minister. When I was collecting material for writing this volume I requested him for an interview. He refused to see me. Guilty conscience. But did he have a conscience?

The years of our living in Lahore on Lawrence Road were the last of Iqbal's life. Father called at him every second or third month to say hullo. He did not take me with him and I never saw the poet. Many years later I asked him why he did not visit Iqbal more often as he was one of his oldest friends and had been so close to him in London and Cambridge. His reply, as accurately as I can recall it, was, "I had known Iqbal since 1905. We lived together in London. For prolonged periods I lived with him in Cambridge. But by 1934 he had changed as a man. Every afternoon there gathered around him a group of persons who looked upon him as only a little lower than a prophet, or at the least an apostle, a sage, an oracle, a seer. They asked him for his opinions on all sorts of literary, political and religious themes. Most of them were educated and well-read men with good intentions but their daily attendance at his house, their esteem bordering on religious veneration, their over-exuberant praise of whatever he said – all this had spoilt him. It appeared as if he were a worldly ruler holding court. I talked to him about our London and Cambridge days, our common friends, our literary sittings, and our teachers at Lincoln's Inn and Cambridge. To my dismay I found that he had no interest in these things. I went there to see and talk to an old friend. I found a stranger surrounded by courtiers who were strangers to me. Once or twice I tried to interest him in my work of *Hir*. It was like talking in a tunnel. Only the echo of my own words came back. He was totally indifferent. Nor did the mention of Mughal history ignite the slightest spark in him. When I discovered a new Iqbal I cut down the number of my visits. He was a truly great man,

maybe the greatest Indian Muslim, but he could not resist the blandishments of his flatterers, adulators, fawners and sycophants who crowded around him. I felt that he had no use for his old friends. Abdul Qadir and Yusuf Ali had the same impression."

Among the Hindus with whom father was on visiting terms only two are worth mentioning. I have already described how an interest in Mughal history brought Bakhshi Sir Tek Chand and father together. The other was a remarkable man of notable but attractive contradictions.

Diwan Bahadur Raj Narendranath was the only Indian member of the provincial civil service to rise to the high office of financial commissioner under the British. Politically he was a staunch Hindu Mahasabhite and a formidable spokesman of the Punjabi Hindus. Socially he was an upholder of joint Hindu-Muslim traditions and of whatever the two communities had in common. In his friendships and everyday social life he was liberal, broad-minded and free of all prejudices. He carried the stamp of Muslim culture with panache and some pride.

He lived in a palatial house with all the trappings and elegance of an aristocrat. (In 1947 this house was allotted to an obscure Muslim lawyer from East Punjab). He did not let his cosmopolitan living interfere with his faith. As he entertained a great deal there were two Muslim cooks on his domestic staff. They prepared dishes for Muslim guests, including several of mutton and chicken. He himself never touched meat. He was not only fluent in Persian but knew by heart a great deal of its poetry. He also had a nodding acquaintance with Arabic. When he talked to his Muslim friends and guests his style and pronunciation were precisely those of an educated Muslim, and hearing him no one could suspect that he was a Hindu. In the circle of his close friends he spoke pure Punjabi, and was an interesting conversationalist. He used his influence to get jobs for the

sons and relations of several of his Muslim friends. The basis of father's friendship with him was his deep interest in the epic of Hir, which he considered as a common heritage of all Punjabis irrespective of their religion.

Hafiz Mahmud Shirani was very dear to my father. They were like brothers, and father always called him "bhai Mahmud". Their relationship can be described as that of boon companions. They were two minds with a single thought.

Short of stature and dark of complexion, he spoke Urdu in the Tonki accent. He wore full boots, even in the college. His scholarship was outstanding, and there has been none even half as good who lived and worked in north India. His residence was a modest 3-storey house on Fleming Road, where father and I visited him dozen of times. In his study was spread a carpet on which he sat with a bolster to support his back. And from this humble seat he wrote gems of literature and criticism which inspired awe and wonder in his contemporaries. When he published his brilliant but scathing criticism of Maulana Shibli Naumani's celebrated work *Sh'ir-ul-'Ajam* no man of letters in India uttered a word of refutation.

When we came to Batala from Lahore in 1937 a novel and unexpected relationship emerged between father and Iqbal and father and Shirani. In both cases the end was depressing.

Iqbal's older son, Aftab, a barrister who was practising law in Karachi, had poor and unpleasant relations with his father. Once he came to Batala and narrated to my father the long story of Iqbal's ill treatment, persecution and neglect, and asked him to speak to Iqbal and try for a reconciliation. Father told him that Iqbal had changed much and probably would not listen to him. But Aftab persisted in his entreaties and father had to go to Lahore to speak to Iqbal. This was towards the end of 1937 when we were just settling down in Batala. When father met Iqbal and broached the subject the

poet in turn gave his own version of the father-son relationship, accused Aftab of many vices and flatly refused to take him back into the family fold. Father came back crestfallen and told Aftab of his failure, who took it badly and returned to Karachi in a depressed mood. He had stayed with us for two days while father was pleading his case in Lahore. In spite of his worries he was good company for my mother whom he impressed with his stories and personality. She remembered him long after he had gone out of our lives.

Father made an equally unsuccessful but long drawn out effort at peacemaking between Mahmud Shirani and his only son Akhtar, who was a distinguished poet and the father of the modern romantic school of poetry in Urdu. Shirani was fed to death with Akhtar's addiction to hard drink and other bad habits. He had repeatedly apologized to his father, promised to mend his ways, and soon reverted to his vices. Shirani was deeply hurt.

One day Akhtar arrived at our house in Batala and said his father had turned him out of his home. He called father Chacha Abba and my mother Chachi Amman. He appealed to my father to go to Lahore and intercede on his behalf with his father. Father was very busy and said he could not leave Batala but would write to Shirani. He wrote a long letter and asked Akhtar to take it to Lahore. I don't know if it led to any understanding. But six months later Akhtar was back again with the same request for arranging a *rapprochement* between him and Shirani. This time father went to Lahore and it seems the quarrel was patched up.

But the truce did not last long. A year later Akhtar reappeared in Batala, and by a coincidence his father was staying with us. This led to a strange and amusing but sad scene. All our non-family guests were accommodated in a suite of rooms on the ground floor, and our sitting room and library were also on the same floor. Now Akhtar was sent upstairs so that father and Shirani could hold their secret

conference downstairs. So while the young man's future was being decided one floor below he himself was beseeching my mother to persuade my father to put in a word in his favour to Shirani. Next day father and son confronted each other in the sitting room and had a long talk, with my father acting as an umpire. Apparently Akhtar was at fault and Shirani was very angry. On the third day the two left Batala together. Akhtar did not come again. A little later Shirani retired from the Oriental College and went back to his home in Tonk.

The only interesting and benign aspect of both the attempts at reconciling sons and fathers was my mother's deep concern with the problem. When father went for his daily walk in the afternoon both Aftab and Akhtar (in their separate visits) would come upstairs on her invitation and each would pour his woes into her receptive ears. She showed them more sympathy than my father, and later in the evening pleaded their cases before him. When father said it was none of her business, she said they were her husband's (in Akhtar's case her husband's brother's) sons and therefore also her business. She made no secret of her empathy for the boys and treated them like her own children. This was quite in keeping with her nature. She was a friend to all sorts of unfortunates and lame ducks. The eternal mother!

After 1942 when we lived in Lahore for 8-9 months every year and after 1947 all the year, father met two very old friends which pleased him to no end: Sir Abdul Qadir and Mian Abdul Aziz Falakpaima.

Judged by the standards of duration and intensity of relationship and depth of affection Abdul Qadir was my father's best friend. In an age when purda was strictly observed in the upper classes my mother did not hide herself from him and talked to him freely. Besides, Anwari, Lady Abdul Qadir, was a good friend of hers.

Abdul Qadir was a delightful man. His attachment to learning went back to his youth when he had begun to issue

the famous Urdu literary journal *Makhzan* in 1901, before he went to England to read for the bar. He did so much for the improvement and popularization of the Urdu language that he was called "the Sir Sayyid of the Punjab". He wrote several books of literary criticism and for some time lectured on Urdu literature at the Punjab University. He was one of the most sparkling conversationalists that I have met. There was a pleasing lilt in his speech which cast a spell on the interlocutor. The hearers felt let down when he stopped talking. Like my father his intellectual interests were varied. He also presented an attractive mixture of eastern and western values. With all this he combined human sympathy: a ready tendency to extend a helping hand, to provide succour, and minister to everyone in trouble.

From 1947 till his death he and father lived on the same road, less than half a mile apart. He had built a bungalow, if I remember correctly called "Zarafshan", towards the Regal Cinema-Mall Road end of Temple Road, opposite Malik Barkat Ali's flat. We lived in a house very near the other, Queens Road, end. For father it was like living in Elysium. He spent two evenings a week at his house, occasionally taking me with him so that I might learn something from such men; these frequent visits also led to my friendship with Abdul Qadir's youngest son, Riaz. He called at our house less often as he had a large circle of friends and several speaking commitments. But if for some reason father could not visit him for over a week he sent his servant to inquire if all was well or came himself. As far as I remember they talked mostly about oriental literature, the essential appeal of poetry to both our emotion and intellect, fine arts, and their London days. He died in Lahore on 9 February 1950.

The other long lost friend was Mian Abdul Aziz Falakpaima, senior to my father by five years, the only Muslim and the second Indian of the provincial civil service to serve as commissioner of a division. He made a

name for himself in writing Urdu essays of contemplative nature at a time when this genre was hardly practiced; he wrote under the pseudonym of "Falakpaima". The two men had known each other since the days of their youth, but then a very long gap intervened, and that is why father noted in his diary on 14 March 1948, "Today met Abdul Aziz Falakpaima after 20 years". But the long interval had not cooled the warmth of their relationship.

He lived on Birdwood Road, off Jail Road, which was not too far away from our Temple Road residence. The two friends got together frequently, as if to catch up with the lost time and make amends for the long separation. The chief intellectual interest which bound them was love of Western literature. He had read extensively, and to good purpose, not only English but also European literature. He could read French without difficulty, but asked my father to guide him in German letters and recommend their best English or French translations. Then he sent me with his borrowing card to the Punjab Public Library to get the books suggested by father. He introduced me to the little-known Belgian philosopher, Maurice Maeterlinck and asked me to read his essays and plays. Under his encouragement I wrote my first article on this thinker, which appeared in the March-April issue of *Ravi*, the magazine of the Government College.

His English accent was good. In conversation he spoke with a display of authority in his voice. I don't know whether this was natural or a by-product of his senior bureaucratic appointments. He had a good collection of books at his house, mainly on literature and history. He was fond of reading biographies of all kinds. He died in Lahore on 7 May 1951.

I don't know where and when father first met Professor Ahmed Shah Bokhari. It must have been at some time in 1934-36 when both were living in Lahore, because at the end of 1936 or early 1937 Bokhari went away to Delhi to join the newly-established radio network. I have no recollection of

his calling at our Lawrence Road house, but have a very vague memory of once visiting him with father at his McLeod Road flat. But they must have known each other well, because when they met in 1949 at Sir Abdul Qadir's house they seemed to be very closely acquainted. Of their relationship I will have to say something more later.

Abdul Majid Salik belonged to Batala and was a member of our Kakkezai *biradari*. He and father met occasionally but the links between them were not those of close friends. Salik was a man of vast learning in Urdu and Persian letters, the surest proof of which is that a man of Bokhari's stature consulted him on some literary problems. Unfortunately, Salik spent his earlier life in journalism and his later years in translating English books into Urdu. His contribution fell far short of his potentialities. But his name remains supreme as an editor and columnist.

My grandfather had known Justice Shah Din and this acquaintance led to my father's occasional visits to his son, Mian Bashir Ahmad. The relationship was formal and the two did not come closer. Bashir Ahmad was the founder-editor of the highly respected Urdu literary journal *Humayun*, a well-read man and a book collector. He was also a prominent Muslim League leader.

After 1947 father met a Pakistani-European couple and soon became good friends with it. It was at Sir Abdul Qadir's house that he was introduced to Shaikh Ahmad and his Polish wife Anna. They had recently arrived from England after studying fine arts. Shaikh Ahmad, who belonged to Amritsar, lectured on art at the Mayo School of Arts (now the National College of Arts) and Anna was appointed head of the new department of fine arts at the Punjab University. When she came to know that father's knowledge of fine arts was wide-ranging and thorough, though he had no formal qualification, she took him on her department's staff to lecture on European and Islamic arts. He taught there for the next 15 years or so.

Shaikh Ahmad was a modern painter and also an expert on Islamic architecture. He published a detailed study on the latter subject. He was a regular patron of the Coffee House and that is where I met him first and we became good friends. He presented me an inscribed copy of his book on architecture, the first addition of an autographed volume to my personal library. When he came to know whose son I was his affection for me increased. Thus he had the unique distinction of being at the same time my friend and my father's. Later his relations with his wife turned so sour that he went away to Karachi where he opened an arts school at which he taught. He died there.

Shaikh Ahmad was an attractive man, equally adept in making friends with his equals and juniors. His friendship was available to all who could return his affection and sincerity. His students, some of whom were my friends, said he was a good teacher. As a result of his English training he made it a practice to bring some of his students to the Coffee House every weekday, discuss art with them and others around the table, and pay their bill. He wore his hair long, a contemporary bohemian touch. He spoke vehemently, often shaking his head to underline his argument, and then jerking it backwards to move the hair away from his eyes. I found this mannerism engaging. He had a clear mind and could easily explain complicated points on the level of the inquirer.

If friendship be confined in the main to epistolary relationship then father had another good friend in Sir Shafaat Ahmad Khan. Their common interest in Indian history was the basis of their connection. He belonged to the United Provinces and taught history at the Allahabad University. He had acted as secretary to the Muslim delegation to the Round Table Conferences in London and had been a member of the U.P. legislative council. Author of several books and editor of a respected journal of history he

carried a big name among the contemporary historians. He came to Lahore three or four times and the two men met (I was present on one occasion); that is all. But they corresponded a great deal. I have found only one letter from him written on 31 May 1946 from Calrendon Cottage, Kaithu. His handwriting was a mere scrawl and hard to decipher. He was a man of considerable ability and scholarship. He was tall and well built with a large head. His eyes were weak and he wore thick lenses. On 19 July 1947 he was stabbed to death in Simla by a Muslim league fanatic. A lamentable end to a good man who had done so much to protect the interests of Indian Muslims.

Khan Bahadur Mian Afzal Husain, Sir Fazl-i-Hussain's half-brother, was such a close family friend as to be counted as a brother, and my sisters and I always addressed him as *chachaji*. I have already said in the earlier pages of this chapter that my grandfather had decided to send my father to England in 1904 mainly on the advice of Mian Husain Bakhsh of Batala, a retired district judge. He was the father of Fazl-i-Husain and Afzal Husain. Fazl-i-Husain was much older than father and the two also did not live for any length of time in the same town, so a friendly relationship could not develop. Still the family connection worked well and they were like distant brothers.

But with Afzal Husain father had affectionate relations and his sister Piyari Begum was a friend of our family. Afzal Husain was probably the first Indian Muslim to get a first in natural sciences at Cambridge. In India he taught at the Punjab Agricultural College, of which he later became the principal. He was a member of the Punjab Public Service Commission in mid-1940s with his office on one side of the Simla Hill and our residence at No.1 David Road on the other. Often after the office hours he came and stayed with us for a couple of hours. I remember that one day he brought with him the chairman of the Commission, an Englishman called

Marsh, who was interested in the culture of the Punjab and listened spellbound to my father when he told him at length the story and meaning of the Hir epic.

Afzal Husain was a serious-minded person but could act lively with children. When we were in Ballamabad and he in Lyallpur the families visited each other regularly. His daughter Azra was exactly my age and we were playmates as long as we lived in the village.

Time, coincidence and happy chance have combined to transmit father's friendships to the next generation on both sides, and I am glad to count among my close friends many of the sons and daughters of his friends.

In Batala Muhammad Jamil's older son, Khalilur Rahman, was my schoolmate; he later headed the Associated press of Pakistan. I have had very friendly relations with three sons of Shaikh Ghulam Akbar: Ashiq Husain Batalavi, Agha Babur and Ejaz Batalavi. Hafiz Shirani's son Akhtar was too old to be my friend, but his son Mazhar and I know each other. My acquaintance with Iqbal's younger son Javed is slight. Sir Abdul Qadir's youngest son Riaz was a close friend and we spent several hours together daily in the Coffee House for 13 years. Mian Abdul Aziz Falakpiama's only son Rashid was another good friend of the Coffee House days; he is dead, but my friendship with his sisters Nigar and Raushan flourishes. Professor Bokhari's younger son, Haroon, who is married to Rushan, is another example of "inherited" friendship, as was Abdus Salam Khurshid, son of Abdul Majid Salik, and Manzar, son of Mian Bashir Ahmad. Shaikh Ahmad, as I have said, was father's friend and mine at the same time.

One friendship has traversed three generations. My grandfather knew Mian Husain Bakhsh. My father knew Mian Fazl-i-Husain. I have known Fazl-i-Husain's son, Azim Husain, since the 1960s. In 1994-99 when I was living in London and Cambridge he invited me and my

wife to lunch at his Hampstead residence every month, where we enjoyed the generous hospitality of his wife, Apa Nusrat, who belongs to Gujerat.

As I have no children the story of these friendships ends with my death. But as long as they lasted they gave immense pleasure to all of us.

THE LINGUIST

In civilized societies men and women who are fond of reading and all scholars know more than one foreign language. This has nothing to do with the recent much-used but absolutely false slogan of the world becoming a global village.

The practice goes back at least to the nineteenth century when for the British elite a journey through the Continent was the equivalent of the later "finishing school". However insular the British may have been in their outlook in the past and to some extent even today, they knew that their (and all the Europeans') culture was rooted in classical Greece and Rome, their religious Reformation in Martin Luther's Germany, and their artistic and literary Renaissance in Italy. Therefore a visit (often more than one) to the areas where their history and intellect took birth and grew up was an indispensable part of their education. The British are not known for their ability or willingness to learn foreign languages. But the peoples of Europe did not speak English. Some French was taught at good British schools. The educated tourists' main attraction lay in Greece and Rome. Few tried to be fluent in spoken Greek. But the glory of Italian paintings forced them to learn Italian. Moreover, Italian and French are derived from Latin, and most of the British travellers had a satisfactory knowledge of it from their school and university days.

The greatest help came from the university syllabus and curriculum. Till the outbreak of the second World War a large number of liberal arts students at Oxford, Cambridge,

Edinburgh and Dublin read classics, that is, Greek and Roman history, literature and culture. The most popular subjects after classics were literature and history, and both included a good part of classical languages. This made them quite familiar with the Greek and Italian tongues.

Outside Europe, Christianity and empire-building were strong incentives and provided an excellent opportunity for cultivating African and Asian languages. It is well known that it was the British missionaries and administrators who prepared the first grammars, glossaries, readers, dictionaries and lexicons of several Indian languages, e.g. Tamil, Kannada, Punjabi, Pashto, Sindhi and Baluchi. Proper Urdu prose was born and nursed at the Fort William College.

Arabic and Persian were known to a smaller circle in Britain. Yet chairs of Arabic (which soon also covered Persian) were established at Oxford and Cambridge in the eighteenth century. The results were a number of competent Arabic and Persian dictionaries and the scholars of the standing of E.G. Browne, R.A. Nicholson, and A.J. Arberry (to take only one university, Cambridge).

Study of Islam in Britain, France, Germany and the Netherlands led inevitably to a study of Arabic, Persian and Turkish. This was later buttressed by European political interests in the Middle East.

I have considered Britain because it is the most familiar Western country to us. In some branches of learning the Europeans were far advanced. The Germans are known as the best makers of lexicons in the world and have been adept at learning foreign languages. France had an intellectual interest in Islam and an imperial stake in the Middle East; hence her scholars' proficiency in Arabic, Persian and Turkish. Far behind but still in the running were the Spaniards who were waking up to the realization that a long and important part of their culture and history lay in the Moorish period, and therefore, learning Arabic to

understand and write about it. The Italians combined learning, politics and natural curiosity in their pursuit of oriental literature. It is in Italy that a department of Urdu has existed and flourished for nearly 50 years.

The grand result has been that in the last 200 years the Europeans have produced texts and commentaries with impeccable apparatus criticus of nearly every major Islamic classic in all fields: religion, history, literature, science, philosophy, medicine and art. No Muslim student or scholar can embark on even an elementary research without depending on these editions. How many Christian and/or European classics have been translated into Arabic, Persian, Turkish and Urdu? A far more embarrassing question is: how many Islamic and Muslim classical writings are available in Urdu translation? Shamefully few, and even those are simple translations without any annotation or notes.

Coming nearer home, no Asian historian can ply his trade without a command of two or three European languages. His modern history is a part of European imperial sway. A British writer can, if he wants to, produce a study of his medieval age on the strength of his knowledge of the English language alone, because his sources are in English. But even he will need Latin at some places. But for his post-medieval history he is obliged to be a polymath. In the modern age historiography has become as much an international undertaking as an inter-linguistic discipline. Americans are writing on the French Revolution, the British on Soviet hegemony, the Germans on Moorish art of Spain, the French on Islamic history and the culture of North Africa, the Italians on the Ottoman Empire, the Spaniards on Iran's culture. For some years now even Indian historians and social scientists have been producing respectable works on Central Asia and Africa and issuing learned journals focused on these regions. If there is any one not in sight in this field it is the Pakistani.

The gist of my argument is that in the last one hundred years sources of every field of inquiry have spread themselves over a dozen or so widely-used languages. No scholar of today can work meaningfully without an ability to at least read three or four languages in addition to his own, the choice depending on his field of research.

My father was blessed by nature with an enviable ability to learn, and in many cases master, a foreign language quickly. He exploited this gift to gain much from it. Over the years he attained command of varying authority of eleven languages.

His mother tongue was Punjabi and, unlike the "educated" Punjabis of today, he spoke it everywhere except in the courts of law and the classroom. Of course he occasionally mixed it with English, but not to the silly extent or level of modern days which has produced a new tongue which is neither Punjabi nor Urdu nor English, nor even a pidgin, but an indescribable hash of all the ingredients. He spoke Urdu only when his audience or visitors were (or pretended to be) unable to understand Punjabi or English. To start with his Punjabi was confined to speech. With his interest in *Hir* he began to learn it scientifically and practise its reading and writing. After a few years of hard work he mastered the language to a level where other scholars working in this field sought his guidance.

The age in which he began and ended his active life was the age of Persian in the Indian subcontinent. In history, culture, literature, fine arts and geography the second language of every Indian Muslim was Persian. Till 1947 all educated Muslims and many Hindus, Sikhs and Christians knew good Persian. In the schools one native language was compulsory, and 90% of Muslims opted for Persian and 10% for Arabic. In Muslim homes even uneducated and half-educated women were familiar with Shaikh Sa'di's stories and the poems of Hafiz. Men liked to quote Persian couplets and lines in their Punjabi

conversation. Classical poetical collections were to be found in most homes. Several Urdu poets also composed Persian verses. The more profound work of the two greatest Urdu poets of India, Ghalib and Iqbal, is in the Persian language.

The affiliation of the people of the Punjab to Persian was longer and deeper than that of other Indians or Indian Muslims because Maharaja Ranjit Singh had made it the official language of his dominion, and it continued to enjoy that status for a few years of British period also when the new rulers were deliberating the choice between Punjabi and Urdu as the province's court and official language.

The undefiled well of Persian ran deep and copious in our family. Waziruddin was not only a good scholar of it but also a lover of its classical poetry. He brought up his children in his image. Ghulam Nabi wrote Persian verse. Ghulam Qadir had a passion for Persian poetry. Ghulam Muhammad spent many years in Kabul where Persian was the language of the Palace where he worked. His older children were fluent speakers in the tongue. Even Zuhra, though of little formal education, was fluent in Persian, and she trained her daughter-in-law, Nur, in the enjoyment of its pleasures. Later my mother, who had studied the language in her school in Dodhi, improved her spoken ability and reading capacity in her years in Kabul. Even the servants taken from Batala to Kabul had become fluent speakers in their 12-year stay in Afghanistan.

Thus my father was born and grew up in a Persian milieu. He studied Persian in school and college, but found his proficiency inadequate to his desire to read and understand Persian poetry. He got a good opportunity in England to improve it beyond his expectations under the tutorship of Shirani and the Bilgrami brothers. When he came back his Persian was good enough for any purpose. He used it to his double advantage: enjoying classical poetry and using at first hand the primary sources of Mughal history.

He studied English on many levels, first as an obligatory subject in the school, then to take a degree at the college, and then to study for the bar in English. Fortunately, from his earliest years he learnt it from its native speakers. All his teachers at the Mission School in Bahawalpur, the ALOE School in Batala, the Forman Christian College in Lahore, and the Lincoln's Inn in London were well-educated and born into the language. Naturally this improved his pronunciation and enlarged his vocabulary. His spoken English was very good, with the right accent and clear elocution.

In England he laboured hard on perfecting his English, partly because he wanted to know it as well as the British, and partly because of the examples and encouragement of Sayyid Ameer Ali, Abdullah Yusuf Ali and Sir Thomas Arnold. He wrote essays and attended lectures in several universities on the evolution and etymology of the language. His knowledge of French and German helped him in establishing connections between many English words with their origins in Greek and Latin.

Father sent some of his writings to Professor J.F. Bruce, the Oxford-educated professor of history who had taught at the Punjab University in the 1930s and early 1940s. The following sentence in his reply merits quotation: "Every time you send me something written by you and I read it carefully my respect for your command over the language increases. How many Indians can write English as you do? I would go further. There are not many here in England, even among those to whom literature is a profession, who can match your mastery of our tongue".

It is a proof of father's keen interest in the language that during his use of the *Greater Oxford English Dictionary* and The *Concise Oxford Dictionary* he discovered that in several cases relevant words were not included, some compound words were missing, and alternative meanings

and connotations of certain words and constructions were excluded. On 10 April 1939 he wrote a letter to the editors of the *Dictionary*. Unfortunately his letter has been lost. Its date is confirmed by the reply he received. The editor's letter also shows that father's list of queries and desiderata ran to over a hundred items.

On 20 May one of the two editors, H.G. Le Mesurier, wrote back:

THE OXFORD DICTIONARY OF MODERN ENGLISH

Editors:	Lt.-Col. H.G. Le Mesurier
A.J. Fowler	4 Barnfied Avenue
H.G. Le Mesurier	Exmouth Devon.

20 May 1939

Dear Sir,

I briefly acknowledged your letter of the 19th April on the 1st May, and now, having returned to work, can deal with it more fully.

You ask which of your suggestions can be made use of in future editions of C.O.D. [*Concise Oxford Dictionary*]: there is a list of what, at least, would be considered:-

Already noted, and in the Pocket Oxford Dictionary, 3rd Ed.

Autarchy (both senses), hitch-hike.

Already noted for inclusion

Stroboscopic, Maginot Line, pack-ice, rating

Not previously noted *annexure, Escorial, subvene, aerial perspective, figure-skating, linen-fold (Archit.), pot-bank, conservancy (this common sense is omitted from most dictionaries), string out, sworn of, undertone, keep on right side of, metric carat, Muses (names).*

I do not think that any dictionary need concern itself seriously with such words as 'unglamorous', 'lexicologist',

and 'bruddykin's. 'Organza' is not to be found in O.E.D. [*Oxford English Dictionary*] or Webster; *annex*, in the sense given, is Journalese; *Cleon, chatoyant, Isis, Venue Cliquot, gage d'amour*, and *Lamp of Remembrance* are rather outside the scope of C.O.D.; 'digs' can be found under *digging, ditherer* can be guessed from *dither*, and *eroticism* from *erotic*; for *lettre de cachet* see *cachet*; the important world *totalitarian* may be found in C.O.D. *Addenda*, but only in the 1938 impression.

Compound swords are numberless; we give more than any other small dictionary, but it is obviously impossible to include even a tithe of those in use, and the first to be omitted are those whose meaning is plain, or can be found with a little effort. Take your No.27 'anti-Komintern': *anti*-and *Comintern* are both given, and the sense of the compound follows; for *chateau en Espagne* you have only to look up *castle*, where 'castle in Spain' is given as a Gallicism; 'blatant beast' can be found under *blatant*, and 'Hobson's choice' under *choice*; for *hand-grenade* you need only look up *grenade*; for 'Strad Violin' see the full word *Stradivarius*; and so on.

New senses are constantly appearing, and no dictionary can keep pace with them. Some of those you give are not new: that of *Calvary* is in C.O.D. I fancy that your identification of *rule* with *stethoscope* arises from some such phrase as 'the doctor ran the rule over him', meaning that he made a medical examination of the man, a common enough phrase – so far as I know, *rule* does *not* mean 'stethoscope'. The sense of *sponsor* as a verb seems clearly enough shown in the *Addenda*.

Phrases, like compound words, are innumerable, and the most rigid selection is necessary. Several of those you suggest for inclusion are already included: No.84s, for instance, needs a reference to p. 1247 (1) 1.12 and the word *cake*, where the original form of this expression is given (which may appear as 'annex the Abernethy' and in a

hundred other distortions!); 'do oneself well' is in under do; 'portion off' is clear enough from the definition of the main word; 'make tracks' is fully given under track; 'all the world and his wife' can be found under world.

Among other of your points I note the following:-

No.34: I should say clothing should certainly be included under 'creature comforts', but it is no doubt a matter of personal opinion. No.66: Galsworthy's use of *coil* (n.) in the sense 'tangle' is unusual; Nos. 97 and 103 completely floor me – they may have a meaning, but I don't know what it is. No.104: 1,374 is usually given as the reference; in my copy it is 1.381. *Rating* can certainly be used in the plural, and 'Naval ratings' is a common phrase. No. 105: I agree that 'assent' is not happy; O.E.D. qualifies the word by 'unsolicited', which makes the sense clear.

I am much obliged to you for your interesting letter, and I regret that pressure of work and the absence of the necessary references make it impossible for me to comment on more of the items.

Yours very truly,
H.G. Le Mesurier

A. Aziz, Esq.

The reader will notice the qualifications with which the letter is hedged in. But one comment on le Mesurier's reply is in order. Was the maker of the most widely-read dictionary of the English language offering the excuse that his office lacked the necessary references? Or, was he reluctant to admit that the knowledge of an Indian, who was not a specialist of English etymology and semantics, was superior to his own?

Father studied Arabic at home and in school. But he was conscious of the poor quality of his proficiency. In London he became a student of the Bilgrami brothers and spent three years on gaining a good grasp of it. He kept it alive after his

return to India. He read the Quran with only a rare recourse to a dictionary. He studied classical Arabic poetry and his favourite poets were Mutanabbi and Abul Fárid, whose best ghazals he knew by heart. He considered Abul Fárid as the only true Sufi poet in the language.

I have already narrated under what pressures and compulsions he learnt French and German in London. He did not let his command of them weaken or his knowledge of them become rusty because of disuse, and that is why he was able to teach both language at the Punjab University in 1918-26, 1934-37 and 1942-52; after 1952 he served as paper-setter and examiner till 1966. Kazi Muhammad Aslam, professor of philosophy at Government College and later its principal, told me in 1975 that he was a student of German in my father's class in 1935-37 and had found him to be a very good teacher.

Father studied some Urdu at home and then in school. That was the sum total of his formal instruction. The rest he did privately under the tutelage of Shaikh Abdul Qadir and Mahmud Shirani. Later he read the major poets of the language and some masters of its prose. He could write it fluently and skillfully, as is evidenced by the article he wrote on the death of Shirani in the *Oriental College Magazine* and the longer assay on Waris Shah and *Hir* which was never published under his name. He rated Urdu verse very low in comparison to Persian poetry.

In or about 1917 he began to develop an interest in fine arts. I have no idea who or what was the inspiration. Gradually he came to pay more attention to Islamic art, European painting and Greek and Roman sculpture. His knowledge of Persian and Arabic was good enough for studying Islamic art, and of French and German for European art. But he realized that he could not enter the spirit of Italian painting, both the mother and the first child of the Renaissance, without a good grasp of the Italian language. There was no person or school in Lahore to help him.

By a happy chance, when he was teaching at Islamia College, he encountered an Italian scholar, named Giovanni Brioni, who, God knows why, had come to India to learn Persian. Father was so glad of this opportunity that he immediately entered into a bargain with him. He would teach him Persian for eight hours a week in exchange for an equal tuition in Italian. For three years this barter system worked well. At the end of it father knew enough of the language to read and write it to a respectable degree of proficiency. He did not find it difficult as he already knew good French and some Latin (learnt as a student of law in London), which were of great help.

He had learnt Italian principally for the sake of studying Italian art, but later he found that this acquisition also fulfilled one of his other ambitions, that of reading the great Italian poets in the original. He immediately grappled with Dante, reading his *Divine Comedy* again and again to understand the poet and the poem. Later when he drafted the opening chapters of his proposed work on the epics of the world and the place of *Hir* among them this study of Dante proved useful and relevant.

Since his days in England when he had heard lectures by eminent men on the history and make-up of the English language he had harboured a wish to learn Greek and Latin which were the two major founts of English vocabulary. But no facilities for such a study had been available. All linguists assert that to understand a language it is imperative to go to its sources. This solves many problems of understanding the nature and the temper of the language you are studying or you already know. It enables one to better comprehend the meaning, form, shape, pronunciation, expression and usage of every word.

For my father there were two other factors pressing him to learn these languages. One of his principal interests was philosophy, which he had studied in England and was later

to teach in Lahore. An acquaintance with Greek and Latin is a great help in reaching a deeper understanding of European ancient and medieval thought. Terms used by Plato and Aristotle are the current coins of Western philosophy, and knowledge of the original terminology helps in resolving many difficulties. A similar demand for learning Greek and Latin was made by his study of fine arts. The understanding and appreciation of European art is facilitated by familiarity with the languages of its original expression.

Thanks to the arrival of Dr. Hague and his wife in Lahore in 1916 father got an unexpected opportunity to learn Greek and Latin. Both man and wife knew the languages, and Dr. Hague undertook to teach Greek and his wife Latin to their Indian friend who had the enthusiasm of a young man. In the two years provided by this chance he learnt to read both languages, and that is what he wanted.

There was one language which he learnt solely for the sake of his study of Hir. This was Gurmukhi. It was in 1939 that two Sikh gentlemen came to Batala from Amritsar to see father about his work on its text. Both of them insisted that he should learn Gurmukhi, and claimed that this acquisition would help him to understand a part of Waris Shah's vocabulary. After a few days Sardar Kapur Singh came from Lahore. He was in the Indian Civil Service and deeply learned in Punjabi poetry. He stayed with us for one night, and there were long conversations centring on Punjabi poetry and Waris Shah. He too made a strong suggestion that father must learn Gurmukhi.

This persuaded him to make an effort to learn his second language (Greek was the first) of an unfamiliar script. The problem was to find a teacher. I suggested that he should get in touch with the man who taught Gurmukhi at my school. He did not let the grass grow under his feet, and next day he went to the school, saw the headmaster whom he knew well, and explained what he wanted. The headmaster summoned

Ruhar Singh Gyani, the Gurmukhi teacher, and asked father to settle the matter with him. All arrangements were made with dispatch and the terms agreed upon.

On the following day the Gyani embarked on his duties. The tuition was given four days a week. The main difficulty was the new script, but father dealt with it with a student's diligence and assiduity. Like a child he used a slate and pencil to practise the alphabet. His progress was slow but steady. What he was aiming at was the ability to read it fluently. He achieved this in two years. A 4-volume large-format dictionary of the language was sent for from Amritsar. Then he purchased several versions of *Hir* published in the Gurmukhi script, which were added to his sources in the preparation of the text.

There was one language which he wanted to learn but could not, because of lack of time and opportunity. This was Spanish, which he required for his study of Moorish architecture of Spain.

THE HISTORIAN

My father's first published work on Mughal history was his five articles on "A History of the Reign of Shah Jahan", which appeared in the *Journal of Indian History* (Madras) as follows:

Vol. VII, Part II, pp. 1-23
Vol. VII, Part III, pp. 1-18
Vol. VIII, Part III, pp. 1-23
Vol. IX, Part II, pp. 1-42
Vol. IX, Part III, pp. 1-27

The offprint of these articles carry no date, but I checked at the Cambridge University Library and the years of these volumes are 1926-28. These articles, amounting to 133 pages,

were never published as a book. But portions of them were used by father in the volumes he later published. In addition, it seems certain that several more articles by him appeared in the 1930s but I have no record of them.

Before mentioning his books it is proper to cast a glance at the manifesto he issued in 1941 or 1942 describing his programme of research. Entitled "The Mughal Indian Court and its Institutions: A Close-Range survey of facts and details drawn from the original Persian and contemporary European sources", it ran as follows:

"In this Series the author has attempted a study of the Mughal court and the institutions connected with it, so as to obtain a tolerably clear picture of Mughal court life, and of the actual working in practice of the administrative system. In the opinion of the writer the spirit of this civilization can be better studied in the customs and manners of the people and in the systems and institutions in which they crystallized, than in the vicissitudes of kings and peoples which too often pass for 'history'. The real life of a people is their social, intellectual and economic life, and this can be better studied in their manners and morals, their etiquette and procedures, their arts and letters, than in the sequence of political events.

An attempt has been made to visualize the *milieu* which served as the cradle of Mughal thought and culture.

Books and pictures, buildings and furniture, arms, jewels and dresses, thrones and carriages, vessels and utensils – all articles of daily and occasional use in fact are passed in review, so as to give us an idea of people's thought and life, taste and judgment, ambitions and achievements, and of public industry and royal patronage. Stirring scenes of Mughal court life – durbars and celebrations, receptions and progresses – are reproduced before the reader, and the glory of the Mughal past lives again.

Such a study of concrete facts will help us better to test the foundations of the social and administrative system of

the Mughuls than theorizing and learned discussions built on conjectures and unverifiable hypotheses. We can see here how intimately apparently unconnected currents of historical knowledge underlie, explain, and lead up to, the art and life of this great people.

It is expected that this series of monographs, when completed, will furnish material for a true social and economic history of Mughal India – indeed for a somewhat comprehensive history of Mughal Indian civilization.

The work is meant both for the scholar and the general reader; and an effort has been made to keep the style simple, clear and non-technical throughout; although here and there the specialized character of the subject made it a difficult task.

The Series comprises the following volumes, which are independent of one another:

(1) The Mansabdari System and the Mughul Army.
(2) The Imperial Treasury of the Greater Mughuls and Thrones.
(3) Arms and Jewellery.
(4) Horse and Elephant Trappings and other Conveyances used by the Indian Mughuls.
(5) Furniture, Vessels and Utensils.
(6) The Imperial Library of Agra and Delhi.
(7) Court and Camp (including the Haram).
(8) Royal Stables and Menagerie.

Orders and inquiries to be addressed to the Author:
Abdul Aziz, Bar-at-Law,
Batala (Punjab), India."

When he came to the actual writing of these volumes he chose to change some of the titles and amend the contents. Finally, of these 8 volumes he could publish only the following 5:

1. *The Imperial Treasury of the Greater Mughuls*, first published by Rama Krishna & Sons, Lahore, 1942; revised edition by the Author, 79 Poonch Road, Lahore, 1942.
2. *Mansabdari System and the Mughul Army*, the Author, 1 Davis Road, Lahore, December 1945.
3. *Arms and Jewellery of the Indian Mughuls*, the Author, 65/6 Temple Road, Lahore, August 1947.
4. *Thrones, Tents and Their Furniture used by the Indian Mughuls,* the Author, 15 Firdausi Street, Lahore, 1964.
5. *The Imperial Library of the Mughuls,* Punjab University Press, Lahore, 1967. It was edited by A. Shakoor Ahsan. Note the omission of the word "Indian" in the title; that vas the university's decision taken against father's wish. The volume is very badly edited; because of his old age and failing eyesight father could not check or supervise the editing and final production.

He left behind him an incomplete but typed manuscript of a book entitled "The Imperial Wardrobe of the Greater Mughuls".

In addition to these books and articles he wrote a few detailed review-articles on some important publications for various historical journals. Only one of these was found in his papers: "*Studies in Indo-Muslim History: A Critical commentary on Eliot and Dowson's History of India as told by its own Historians by Shahpur Hormasji Hodivala, Bombay, 1939*". The 5-page offprint bears neither any date nor the title of the journal in which it appeared.

I am not a Mughal historian and therefore unable to give an opinion on the quality of these books. I leave this task to two classes of experts: the reviewers of specific volumes and a few general comments by well-known scholars and educationists.

The only reviews available to me are all of his first book *The Imperial Treasury of the Greater Mughuls*. I reproduce them below:

P.N., *The Sunday Tribune*, Lahore, 13 December 1942:

"This is the second volume in the series "The Mughul Indian Court and its institutions', a close-range survey of facts drawn from original Persian and contemporary European sources. For a number of years past Mr. Abdul Aziz has devoted himself to a thorough and detailed study of Mughul court life and the Mughul system of administration; and his series of monographs, the result of laborious, patient research, promise to be a valuable record of Mughal Indian civilization, better and more comprehensive than the attempts hitherto made. The labour and industry that has gone into the making of this series must indeed have been tremendous. Original sources and authorities have been examined by the author critically and with a discriminating eye. Mr. Abdul Aziz's work is indeed of the first rank and on the basis of his achievement he amply deserves the status of a leading authority on Mughal Institutions.

There are interesting details in the book of the wealth – cash, precious stones, pearls and gold – possessed by the various Mughul Emperors. For instance, the cash treasure left by Akbar at Agra and provincial fortresses amounted to no less than 25 crores of rupees. Jahangir's cash treasure was even greater. The so-called Koh-i-Noor dispute is discussed almost threadbare and the history of this celebrated diamond provides a good story.

Mr. Abdul Aziz has the advantage of a simple, lucid style, free from verbiage. His work is of great value, specially to students and teachers of history. Even the casual reader will find the publication of much interest."

Unsigned review, *The Educational Review*, Madras, January 1943, pp. 39-40:

"Mr. Abdul Aziz, though a lawyer by profession, has earned a name for solid research in the history and institutions of the Indian Mughuls, and he is now engaged in bringing out a series of monographs on the Mughul Indian court and its institutions, like the Mansabdari system, the imperial treasury, arms and jewellery, thrones, furniture, etc., the imperial library, court and camp, the royal stables and menagerie, the trappings and conveyances of the Mughul emperors; and this book is the first of the series to be published. The substance of this book was published at various intervals in the *Journal of Indian History*, Madras. It contains very useful equipment [*sic.*] matter relating to the Hijri and Ilahi chronology, and the regnal years of the emperors from Akbar to Aurangzeb, and the celebrations of the imperial birthdays and jewellers' weights.

The first chapter describes the imperial household which stood in the same relation to the court as anatomy to the art of animal sculpture. Attention is pointed to the stress laid on symbolism in the conduct of the administration and etiquette, and the treatment is confined to the period 1526-1700. The sources of revenue, - including land-revenue as it operated in the different regions – are sketched. The description of the jewel treasury, apart from the cash treasury, is interesting; and its significance is deemed to be its reflection of the spirit of the age. It includes a considerable amount of general information on the precious stones and their uses and value and is followed by an elaborate account of the gems and gem-stones as occurring in historical notices of the Mughuls, and a survey of precious stones and pearls, comprehending a *résumé* of the discussions and views held as to the Koh-i-Noor and its real origin. Inferior diamonds had no place in Mughul court-life. The less valuable stones are next detailed, as also pearls and other desirable commodities like porcelain, chinaware, ivory carving, walrus ivory, tortoise-shell, bazaar stone, etc. The last chapter details the contents of the jewel-

treasury of the emperors from Babar to Aurangzeb and even to the date of Nadir Shah's plunder. According to the De Lact [*sic.*] Manrique estimate, the 24,000 volumes in the articles in the treasury were estimated at 15 crores nearly. The accounts of European travellers and indigenous historians have been collected carefully, even to the most detailed *minutiae*. The treatment, though prolix in places, has a genuine value as bearing on an important much-vaunted, but little-studied, aspect of Mughul history. We eagerly await the succeeding volumes in the series."

Unsigned review, *The Kashmir Chronicle*, Srinagar, 6 January 1942:

"The book under review is a document of research, judgement and industry which must be hailed everywhere as a great contribution to the literature on Mughul history. Chapters of the book have already appeared as articles in the 'Journal of Indian History'. From cover to cover it is impossible to come across any vague, obscure or inaccurate statements in the book. Every reference is backed by authority. Very little was known so far about the sources of revenue in the time of Mughuls and also precious stones and but for this publication the gap would have still continued on. The account of the Thrones, chairs and seats of the Mughuls including Peacock Throne is particularly interesting.

It may be true that the author's hard and strenuous labour would not have fructified with such scientific precision had he not been a lawyer also. But it must be admitted that his knowledge of Persian, French and German languages has helped him immensely to produce a standard work in clear and elegant English style. Every library and every student of Medieval India should treasure this work."

W.A., *The Illustrated Weekly of India*, Bombay, 10 January 1943:

"Mr. Abdul Aziz's monograph on 'The Imperial Treasury of the Indian Mughuls' is a monumental work of

solid research, sound judgement and a thorough knowledge of the people of the Mughul period. It contains a vast quantity of pertinent information about various kinds of stones – diamonds, rock crystals, sapphires and rubies – and traces the history of the 'Koh-i-Noor' and of the Jewel Treasury from the invasion of Babar to that of Nadir Shah.

His account of the 'karkhanas', Thrones, Chairs, and Seats of the Great Mughuls makes fascinating reading, and there is a very fine account of the Peacock Throne which is said to be worth a lakh of rupees. He also discusses the sources of revenue under various kings and calculates their value with caution and precision.

Following these chapters the author gives an interesting account of some curiosities and the curative and other properties for which they were highly prized.

This book achieves remarkable success in being on the one hand scholarly and carefully documented, and on the other, retaining a fresh and essentially readable style. It may be recommended alike to the student of history and to the layman."

Unsigned review, *The Weekly Mail*, Madras, 23 January 1943:

"This volume forms one of a series by the same author on the Mughul Indian court and its institutions. It will be of interest both to the student of Mughul administration and to the general reader who is attracted by the curiosities of India's past. The present volume consists of an immensely detailed survey of the resources of the Mughul dynasty over two centuries. The accounts of successive emperors are carefully analysed and an estimate of the treasure in cash for each reign is attempted, the climax being a treasure of 38 crores of rupees under Aurungzeb. The greater part of the book is concerned with famous jewel hoard of the Mughuls. As a preliminary the author discusses jewels in general, jewels in particular (with an interesting history of the Koh-i-

Noor diamond) and then proceeds to analyse the historical reference to all the important and unimportant jewels and semi-precious stones which found their way in and out of the Imperial treasury. Finally, he attempts a valuation of this immense treasure and arrives at a total of 55 crores, in 1658 which after adjustment he considers to be in excess of the gold reserve of the Bank of England in 1927. Such was the fabulous wealth of the Mughuls; the detailed and scholarly account of this lore of jewels and rupees leaves a vivid impression on the mind of the reader."

Unsigned Review, *The Hindustan Review*, Patna, February 1943:

"Mr. Abdul Aziz, who had already established his reputation as a successful interpreter of the history of the Mughul times, has now presented the result of his researches in a volume which forms one of a series on Indo-Mughul court and its institutions, and which will interest students of Mughul administration, as also the general reader. The book consists of a detailed survey of the resources of the Indo-Mughul rulers over two centuries, in which their treasure accounts are carefully analysed. But the greater part of the book is concerned with famous jewels (with an interesting history of the Koh-i-Noor diamond), and there is historical reference to all the important and unimportant jewels, and semi-precious stones, which found their way in and out of the Imperial treasury. Finally, he attempts a valuation of the immense treasure, and arrives at a total of 55 crores, in 1658, which (after adjustment) he considers to be in excess of the gold reserve of the Bank of England, in 1927. Such was the fabulous wealth of the Indo-Mughul Emperors the detailed and scholarly account of which leaves a vivid impression on the mind of the reader. Mr. Aziz's work thus presents a vivid life-like picture of the Indo-Mughul household, its cash treasury, its jewel treasury, and of the role played by gems and gem-stones in our history. The work, which is well-documented, indicates the author's

wide knowledge, and spirit of research. We unhesitatingly recommend this careful study to all interested in the life and manners of the Indo-Mughul times. We shall also watch with a sympathetic interest the author's progress towards the completion of this series."

V. Rangacharya, *Hindu*, Madras, 14 March 1943:

"This very curious and interesting book consists, after two short notes on the chronological scheme adopted by the Mughul emperors and the organization of their imperial household, of two parts, the first of which is devoted to a description of the Cash Treasury, and the second to the Jewel treasury.

In describing the imperial household the author summarizes the arrangements made for safeguarding and making the numerous types of jewels, dresses, and other things of art to which the Mughul emperors turned much of their thought. In the description of the Cash Treasury, Mr Aziz reviews the accumulations of the different emperors in respect of cash, bullion, and coins, quoting all relevant authorities on the subject.

Dealing with the sources of revenue, Mr. Aziz naturally emphasizes land revenue, quoting Monserrate, Manucci and others. In 1580, Akbar's empire then consisting of twelve provinces, brought a total revenue of over 9 crores of rupees, besides, curiously enough, the specifically-mentioned item of 12 lakhs of betel-leaves. In 1595-1601 this total rose to, according to the author's estimate, to 13 and a quarter crores of rupees. The author sees the most solid estimate of the total revenue of the Mughul empire in the *Badshahnama*, which puts it at 700 crores of *dams* or 17 and a half crores of rupees, at the time of the accession of Shahjahan, and at 880 crores of *dams* or 22 crores of rupees of few years later. Of this, one-seventh was the income from Crown lands. The empire then consisted of 23 provinces. Bernier estimates the revenue of Aurungzeb between 1660 and 1665, at 22.9 or nearly 23

crores of rupees. The sober and well-informed author of the *Malumat-ul-Afaq*, who wrote a few years after the death of Aurungzeb, estimates the total revenue at 23 crores, of which the land revenue contributed a little above 17 crores. A fourth of the latter item was from the crown lands. To conclude, the Mughul revenue rose from 17.5 crores in 1627 to 22 crores in 1647, 23 crores in 1660 and after.

In Part II, consisting of five chapters, Mr. Aziz deals extensively with the Jewel Treasury of the Mughul emperors. He gives a preliminary account of the regard paid to the different kinds of precious stones in history by men and women on the ground of superstition, medical uses, and other grounds, fanciful and practical. This general survey shows how widespread has been the cult of the precious stones throughout the world in history. An interesting investigation is then made of the jewellers weights from Babur to Aurungzeb. Taking gems and gem-stones in Mughul history, the author first gives collective notices of them, with matters like the custom of presentation, the rules of acquisition, the ways of wearing the jewels, etc. He then goes into an elaborate history of individual precious stones and pearls like the Koh-i-Noor, Babur's diamond of 221 Ratis, Akbar's Standard Diamond of 126 Ratis, and so on. Then follow elaborate surveys of a similar character in respect of other previous stones. Interesting accounts of chinaware in Mughul India, of ivory work, and of miscellaneous things like tortoise-shells, rhinoceros-horn and other curios follow. A final note on the actual contents of the Jewel Treasury from the time of Babur to that of Nadir Shah concludes a treatise of fascinating interest and much curious gossip."

Unsigned review, *Amrit Bazar Patrika*, 14 March 1943:

"Mr. Abdul Aziz had already well-established his reputation as a close student of the history of Mughul times by his close-range study of the Mughul Indian Court and its

Institutions, the Mansabdari System and the Mughul Army and various other aspects of Mughul times. In all these works he departed from the conventional type of presenting history as a dry-as-dust subject, and endeavoured to endow life and soul into the same.

Mr Aziz's present work is quite in line with his previous works. Herein he has presented a vivid life-like picture of the Mughul Household, its Cash treasury, its Jewel treasury and of the role played by gems and gem-stones in Mughul history, and all that.

The work is well-documented, his judgement controlled, and his sympathy abundant. It indicates his wide knowledge, meticulous industry, and deep researches. The book can be unhesitatingly recommended to all those interested in the life and manners of the Mughul times."

At some time in 1941, before the publication of his first book, my father sent most of what he had written for the various journals in the 1920s and 1930s to several well-known historians and scholars and solicited their opinion on it. I reproduce below the responses he received:

Dr. Sir Shafaat Ahmad Khan, Allahabad University, Allahabad.

"My attention to Mr. Abdul Aziz's work was drawn by his excellent articles in the Journal of Indian History, Madras, in, I think, 1932 or 1933. I followed these articles with the greatest interest, as they dealt with an exceedingly difficult period in a style of striking lucidity and scientific precision. They contained none of the vague, obscure and inaccurate theories and facts which had sometimes impelled me to ask the author, why do you mumble? I am glad to find that Mr. Abdul Aziz has collected together these articles and intends to publish them in a book form. I think it is a wise decision, and will be welcomed by all students of Mughul India.

Mr. Abdul Aziz's monograph on 'The Imperial Treasury of the Greater Mughuls' is a work of solid

research, sound judgement and great industry, and he has laid all students of the period under a deep debt of gratitude by his researches. Only those who have been through these novitiate of a trained historical scholar can appreciate the wealth and variety of the material he has collected together. His introductory chapter on the Imperial Household is excellent, and he has discussed the material with discrimination and tact. It does not pretend to be an exhaustive account, and he had perforce to content himself with the chief offices and departments . . . .

Mr. Aziz then discusses the sources of revenue in the time of greater Mughuls and calculates their value, with his customary caution, detachment and precision.

The other articles deal with precious stones, and discuss the nature and quality of various kinds of stones, and trace the history of the Koh-i-Noor diamond . . . . The section on rubies is excellent while other sections that will appeal to readers are those on Ivory and Ivory Work in India . . . . The chapter headed Actual Contents of Jewel Treasury from the invasion of Babur to that of Nadir Shah is a work of real power, and should be read by all . . . .

This brief analysis of a brilliant work will show at a glance how solid is Mr. Abdul Aziz's contribution to the knowledge of the Mughul India. Mr. Abdul Aziz's account of the Thrones, Chairs and Seats of the Great Mughuls makes fascinating reading, and there is a very fine account of the Peacock Throne . . . .

Mr. Abdul Aziz has also published articles on the Mansabdari System and the Mughul Army. In these articles Mr. Aziz deals with a subject which has been the focus of acute controversy, and discusses the theories of Dr. Paul Horn, Blochmann, and others on the nature and origin of Mansabdari.

The subject bristles with difficulties, and no writer can claim infallibility. I am, however, inclined to agree with the

author that Dr Paul Horn's whole account of the Mansabdari System suffers from a fundamental misunderstanding. The author's explanation of the significance of Zat and Sawar ranks is plausible, as it represents a very dispassionate and thorough analysis of the works of previous writers on the subject. The reader will find Mr. Abdul Aziz's account of Mughul aristocracy as a social phenomenon interesting . . . .

In conclusion I may add that few works published during the last 20 years have dealt so thoroughly and ably with an extremely important aspect of Mughul administration. Mr Abdul Aziz's work is a pioneer undertaking and he has brought to his task all the qualities which are indispensable in a historian – sound judgement, care and caution in the handling of material, thorough study of the data and a lucid styles. I am sure that the work will be welcomed by all students of this period with enthusiasm."

J.F. Bruce, University Professor of History, Punjab University, Lahore

"I have been rather closely aware, during the past eight years, of the studies of Mr. Abdul Aziz in Mughul history: and have read the published results with much interest. He is well equipped for the inquiries to which he has devoted himself for a good many years past, as he possesses not only an exact knowledge of Persian, but also a very wide and critical knowledge of the original contemporary sources from which alone a genuine understanding of that period can be derived. He has also a command of the language of French and German scholars of the subject.

Mr Abdul Aziz is a very meticulous student, who insists upon a precise examination of the minutiae of his subject, which gives his reader confidence in the originality and authenticity of his work. If he can give us a reflective summary of the result of his years of patient scholarship, he will make a valuable contribution to Indian history. He has, too, a clear and pleasant English style."

Khan Bahadur Mian Afzal Husain, Vice-Chancellor, Punjab University

"Mr. Abdul Aziz has sent me for opinion reprints of his articles on various subjects connected with the history of the Mughul period. I have read these entertaining articles with great interest. Scientific precision regarding the authenticity of facts is the characteristic of these valuable contributions. The style is lucid and elegant. I have been struck by the extensive amount of labour which this study must have entailed and the thorough mastery of the subject which the author possesses.

So far history has been dealt with as the story of kings. Mr. Abdul Aziz has rendered valuable service to our country in dealing with the history of the people of the Mughul period. A king may be good or he may be bad, and to base the entire conception of the evolution of society on the personality of the king cannot historically yield important results. The common people are the real material of which history is built, and I congratulate Mr. Abdul Aziz that he has constructed his story from such material."

Dewan Bahadur Dr. S. Krishnaswami Aiyangar, Editor "Journal of Indian History", Madras

"Mr. Abdul Aziz, Bar-at-Law, Batala, Punjab, began rather a large scale history of perhaps the most brilliant period of the Mughul Empire in India, the empire under Shah Jahan. He contributed a series of articles as a preliminary to his work on the Mansabdari System of the Mughuls, and the Treasury and the Jewels of the Mughuls. In both of these subjects, he made a most thorough-going study of the topics he chose for treatment. Had he had the chance of completing the work without interruption, he should have succeeded in publishing a magnificent work on the Mughul Empire . . . . I may say that Mr. Abdul Aziz's work as a student of history deserves all commendation. I only hope that he will have, for this part of the work, such

an encouraging reception as would stimulate him to go forward and complete the work, notwithstanding all the inconveniences, which his professional work as well as the other calls upon his time might interpose. I wish him all success in his enterprise."

The Hon'ble Sir Azizul Haque, Vice-Chancellor, Calcutta University, and Speaker, Bengal Legislative Council.

"I have gone through the reprints of your articles on the 'Imperial Treasury and the Mughul Army' and I congratulate you on your careful collection of materials available in scattered works. I wish there were similar studies on the Mughul administration in India by other research workers."

S.H. Hodivala, esq., Principal and Professor of History (retired), Bahauddin College, Junagadh, author of "Historical Studies in Mughal Numismatics", "Studies in Indo-Muslim History".

"I am very greatly obliged to you for letting me see an advance copy of the Table of Contents of the Series of Monographs which you have projected and the Court and Institutions of the Indian Mughuls. Your plan is an ambitious one and may take some years to complete, but it is a task well worth performing and I devoutly hope that you will be able to complete it, and get the extra treatises published, as you hope to do, during the next three years. To judge from the two dissertations which have been already printed, it is sure to be of great value for the intensive study of the subject. No one who has read those Essays on the Mansabdari System and the Imperial Treasury can fail to be most favourably impressed by your patient industry, wide knowledge of the original authorities, meticulous zeal and avidity for facts and the judgement and good sense you have brought to bear on the interpretation of the crabbed and frequently cryptic phraseology of the contemporary chroniclers. This is specially true of the

disquisition on the Mansabdari System – a subject which has been greatly perplexed by the guesses and theories of previous writers. It is possible that we shall never be able to understand it completely, but your elucidation of some of the obscure and controversial points may be justly described as honest and intelligent attempts to arrive at the truth and they deserve to be carefully considered by all earnest students of the subject."

Muhammad Shafi, Esq., Principal, University Oriental College, Lahore

"For many years Professor Abdul Aziz has been devoting himself almost entirely to a critical study of the problems connected with the history of Mughul India. His extensive reading of the original authorities of the first rank, with a judicious use of contemporary paintings and other illustrative materials, has enabled him to give us a vivid and life-like picture of the Mughul times. His abundant sympathy with his subject, controlled by his critical capacity, has given his narrative the rare quality which is found only in the very best histories of the period. Students of the period will thank him for the deep researches into the period."

The late Mr. W.H. Moreland of the I.C.S., author of "*Jahangir's India*", "*Agrarian System of Moslem India*", etc.

"It gave me great satisfaction to see that you had changed from the conventional style, which merely produces more 'chronicles', and were trying to make history out of the chronicles and the other material available – With all good wishes for the success of your work" (Letter dated 31st. January 1933).

"It is always pleasant to hear from anyone who is trying to find facts in Indian history, where so many people are content to make guesses." (Letter dated 4th. April 1933).

I have written above that the Punjab University had in 1967 omitted the word "Indian" from the title of my

father's book on the imperial library. This was not done on a whim. For some unknown reason, which they never spell out but which has no historical rationale, most Pakistani writers and scholars insist on banning the work "Indian" from all publications. This bias was earlier expressed by Dr. I.H. Qureshi, a historian and politician, in his letter to father written on 9 April 1964 in his official capacity as vice-chancellor of the University of Karachi.

After saying complimentary things in general about father's work and thanking him for sending an advance copy of his *Thrones, Tents and Their Furniture used by the Indian Mughuls,* he wrote, "I have, however, a small suggestion to make provided it is not too late. If the title of the book were to omit the word 'Indian' it would make no difference to the accuracy of the title but in view of the present division of the sub-continent into India and Pakistan its retention may create a certain amount of confusion".

He did not suggest any substitute for the offensive word he wanted omitted. But the omission would create an impossible and ludicrous situation whenever the reference is to the pre-1947 subcontinent. By what title should we remember Jahangir? The "Emperor of India", or "The Emperor of India and Pakistan", or now "The Emperor of India, Pakistan and Bangladesh"? The description "South Asia" cannot be used here because the Mughals did not rule over Ceylon, and South Asia is generally understood to include Ceylon, Nepal, Bhutan and Sikkim.

I have mentioned in an earlier section how the Idara-i-Adbiat-i-Delli of Delhi, a Muslim publishing house owned by one Muhammad Ahmad, pirated father's books and refused to apologise or send me a copy of each. Now consider the contrast between this behaviour and the attitude of an Indian Hindu.

In 1991 I received a letter from Bahrein written by one Mr. K.R.N Swamy. He said he had been trying for some time

to trace me through the universities of Khartoum and Heidelberg and had at last got my address from somebody in Cambridge. I had been living in Cambridge for most of the year 1990. Swamy wrote that he was anxious to get in tough with me in order to obtain my permission to dedicate his book on the Peacock Thrones of the world to my father, jointly with Sir Jadu Nath Sarkar. Of course, I was pleased that my father was being honoured and bracketed with Sarkar, the greatest political historian of the Mughal period. What thrilled me was that this tribute was being paid by a Hindu, and a gentleman whose sense of courtesy was so sharp that he believed it was his duty to seek my permission, though it was neither a moral obligation nor a legal requirement.

The book appeared in 1993 from Bombay under the title of *The Peacock Thrones of the World*. Printed on art paper, beautifully illustrated and well got-up, the 372-page volume was a pleasure to look at and read. In the Introduction of the book the author wrote that "my main source of inspiration has been two eminent historians of the Mughal period, the late Sir Jadu Nath Sarkar (1869-1950) and the late Shaikh Abdul Aziz of Batala (1884-1970) to whom this book has been dedicated". And a little further down, "Throughout my following the Peacock Throne in its travels/travails, the guiding hand of Shaikh Abdul Aziz, the eminent historian of Mughal treasures, was there, to enable me to distinguish the grain from the chaff". When Swamy wrote this he had been a distinguished freelance writer on Indian historical heritage for the last 50 years.

When father's books were reprinted in Pakistan a few years ago only one review appeared in an obscure English weekly. The rest was silence, more eloquent than a thousand words.

EAST MEETS WEST

To know my father it is necessary to understand that the two pillars on which his persona stood were the East and the West. In his person, identity and make-up as well as in his intellect he was a harmonious mixture of both the civilizations, belying the oft-quoted saying that the twain shall never meet.

He went to England at the age of 20, when the average boy is till studying in the intermediate class, and was then thrown into the company of men who were all senior to him by several years. This exposure when his years were still tender coloured his personality deeply. His inner man, mentality, disposition, cast of mind, bent of nature, temper of spirit – all these were moulded by this stay abroad. His mind, brain and intellect grew in the British milieu and society. The qualities of this culture which inspired him most were love of knowledge, esteem for learning, justice, loyalty to principles and respect for humanity. The British had come to India as colonial masters and therefore earned the displeasure of a good many educated Indians and the fear of some among the masses. My father had seen the British in their own home, moved among the educated circles of their society, received his education at their universities, learnt his first advanced lessons at the feet of their teachers, become proficient in their language, and imbibed their social and mental ways, manners and values. His sojourn was also longer than usual. Out of their behaviour patterns and ways of life and his own experience grew his admiration for the British (and in the larger sense Western or more accurately European) culture and civilization. He retained this favourable view all his life.

He picked up European languages, travelled much in the West, studied their history, legal theories and systems, visited their ancient remains, read their philosophy, and

later gained acquaintance with their fine arts. In this respect and to this extent he was a highly Westernised man, but not, as happens in some cases, to the exclusion of all values of his own culture. I would use the word sahib for him, in the better sense of the word.

Fortunately for himself and his family, this sahib was also steeped in the traditions and ways of his forefathers. Amazingly, this oriental or "native" half of his self was also awakened and nursed in England by the happy accident of his association with Sayyid Ameer Ali, Mahmud Shirani, Iqbal, Abdullah Yusuf Ali, Abdul Qadir, the Bilgrami brothers, Sir, Thomas Arnold (an enthusiastic admirer of Muslim Asia) and R.A. Nicholson (who was morally and intellectually more of an Oriental Sufi than a Christian Englishman). The companionship, teaching and guidance of these people taught him to play down or reject completely the geographical frontiers and intellectual and moral differences between the two cultures.

The supreme lesson which he learnt was that knowledge is a unity, a totality, an entity which loses its integrity, identity, oneness, uniqueness, sincerity and trust if divided into compartments of one's own making. By and in its nature it recognizes no boundaries, no barriers, no artificial frontiers. It dare not acknowledge them for fear of losing its hold on man's mind. That is the teaching of Islam too, or the Prophet could not have urged the Muslims to travel as far as China in its search. There were no Muslim savants in China. So obviously he desired his followers to gain knowledge from every quarter of the globe. This was done by classical Islamic thinkers and philosophers when they borrowed much from Greeks by the Mu'tazila when they, influenced by the Neoplatonists, based their teaching on reason, and by the leaders of the modern *islah* movements of Turkey, Iran, India and Egypt when they embraced many Western ideas.

My father's mind grew to its maturity under the aegis of both eastern and western lore and learning, and drew its sustenance from both. His family brought him up in the best traditions of its past. Love of Persian poetry, loyalty to one's native values, respect for the elders, affection for the equals and the juniors, virtues of the bonds of friendship, rewards of living a straight life, satisfaction on earning an honest living, readiness to help the unfortunates, maintenance of the unity of the clan, cultivation of self-respect, possession of ideals and making sacrifices for their sake, always aiming high – these were the lessons he was taught by his family. This training too marked his character and outlook forever, and stamped it with its own ethos, spirit and leaven.

This double impact of the East and the West had many prizes, and made his life rich and rewarding, giving it many facets and dimensions. He wrote the history of the Mughals, and lectured on European painting. He taught English language and literature, and prepared the correct text of Waris Shah's *Hir*. He gave lessons in French and German, and loved Arabic and Persian poetry. He sat at the feet of British Christian dons of Oxford and Cambridge, and in his last years was contemplating writing a commentary on the Quran. He saw in the sculpture of Greece and Rome the same beauty which he found in the architecture of Agra and Delhi. He was as partial to Italian painting as to Turkish and Iranian calligraphy. He felt the same pull of Dante's poetry as of Alhambra's unearthly elegance.

Thus he was at the same time and to an equal degree a *maulavi* and a sahib. And he was proud of this duality which had no seam or parting. He was not a hybrid, or a patchwork of cultures or a mishmash of values. He was multi-faceted. If you cannot see far, to the ultimate limit of your vision, to the end of horizon, you cannot understand the world. If you do not understand the world you cannot know its Maker. This is how

mundane knowledge shows the way to Divine secrets. Only through it can you recognize the Creator and Shaper of all that we see or cannot see.

For 60 years he studied for 8-10 hours a day. His reading was prodigious and well digested. He never leafed through a book. If he read it he did so seriously and with full preparation. He had a pencil in hand and underlined the lines or passages which he considered important or relevant to his current or possibly future interest. Sometimes he wrote his comments in the margin. If he had more to say he used the blank pages in the beginning or end of the volume.

When he wanted to read further in a topic he sought the help of his friends. Once he decided to study Jalaluddin Rumi in his full depth (some depth!). And first read and reread the original Persian *Masnavi*, then Nicholson's masterly English rendering of it along with his commentary, then a few standard Urdu interlinear translations and commentaries, and then his *Diwan-i-Shams Tabriz*; but still not satisfied with that, asked Shirani and Shafi for an extended bibliography. For six months I saw him trying to soak himself in the ripe knowledge and deep wisdom of the most profound poet Islam has produced.

While reading poetry he used three coloured pencils, each sharpened to a pinpoint. On the couplets or verses which he liked he put a blue tick mark in the margin. The very good ones merited a red mark. When a whole ode or poem appealed to him he wrote the English capital letter G (for good) or the Persian word *khub* (good) in green over the opening of the poem in the centre of the page.

He was scrupulous about how to handle a book. He treated it as if it were a living, sensitive organism. He looked after his books with care, wiping away the dust if necessary with a clean piece of cloth, and opening and shutting them gently. In his words, one should never open the book in quick, jerky movement as you fling open the two leaves of a window when the weather is sultry and still,

or shut it violently and quickly as you close the same window to avoid a shower of rain or an eddy of dust. If you do this you harm or permanently damage the spine or the entire binding. The one unforgivable crime in his calendar was the turning of a leaf with a finger moistened with one's saliva. When he saw someone doing this, he would turn away from him as if nauseated, saying "What a boor! Who ever allowed him to handle a book?".

He was fond of collecting dictionaries and lexicons of the languages he knew. Never satisfied with what one dictionary said about an unusual or many-sided word or phrase he would say, "This won't do. I will have to go to the University Library tomorrow and look up the other dictionaries."

If the problem related to a Persian or Arabic word he wrote it down on a long slip of paper, made three copies, and gave one each to Shirani, Shafi and Mulla Umar, asking them to take their time but provide verifiable and authentic explanations, citing their sources. If two respectable dictionaries differed with each other, he asked his learned friends to give their verdict on which one was to be trusted.

His scholarship reflected the same solicitude for truth and authority. Scholarship means to conduct your research thoroughly, to use every accessible source, to judge the relative or comparative authenticity and reputation of every source, to decide which one to trust and use giving reasons for your judgement, to draw valid and reasonable conclusions from the chosen evidence, and finally to present your discoveries and investigations in a clear and well-argued narrative which carries the reader with you. All references must be given without any chance of misunderstanding or misconception. Ambiguity in the writing is a sin and crime. It betrays a muddled mind and misleads or puts off the reader. The language used should be precise, coherent, unambiguous, articulate, vivid and elegant.

Going by the reviews his books and articles earned and the opinions of the learned men quoted in the previous section his scholarship must have had these qualities, though he had not been trained in the art and had no research degree from any college or university. He had learnt the craft and its principles by reading scholarly works and hearing the lectures of able teacher.

The ultimate test of both his scholarship and research was his preparation of the text of the *Hir*, and he emerged triumphant from it. This exercise involved a meticulous comparative study of the variant readings of many manuscripts and the use of his own insight and judgement. His edition of the epic has stood the test of time and is still considered the only pure text of the classic.

He gave the same care and attention to the proofreading of his books. As he published all his books barring one himself, I personally know this. My sister and I helped him in checking three of the books and my wife and I the fourth one. He read and corrected the galleys himself several times and the page proofs once. Finally the pages were given to Kishwar and me to double-check and detect any error. To make us concentrate on the job and stop our attention from wandering we were promised a monetary cash reward: one anna for every misprint we discovered. As every book carried hundreds of diacritical marks and accents we did come across some errors. The few annas that I earned were spent on my hobby of kite-flying when we were in Batala and in the Coffee House when we came to Lahore. This raised my pocket money, pleased father and improved the book.

In speech he emphasized three qualities: correct pronunciation, true accent and exact expression. He consulted more than one dictionary in case of any doubt or lack of unanimity among the lexicographers. He enjoyed these qualities in others. I remember that once he heard Bertrand

Russell speak on the radio. For several days he was all praise for his verbal expression and choice of words.

When he wrote in English or Urdu it was in a clear and large hand, forming each letter carefully. He never scribbled, whether the occasion was a hurried note or a leisurely letter. The manuscript of the text of *Hir* which he gave to Baqir for printing was written in his own hand and looked like the work of a trained calligrapher. He made a second copy with equal care. Unfortunately both had to be given to Baqir because of the faults of the first print. Had Baqir any literary sense he should have given the manuscript to a museum. In the west a manuscript by the hand of the author himself is a highly prized object, commands a big price and is preserved in universities, museums and private collections. If it is saved it also serves as the final and incontrovertible source of the original in case of any error which has gone uncorrected and undetected in the printed book.

The greatest zest of his life was poetry in any language. When he could not read the original language he searched diligently for the best available translation(s). I can give two examples of this. He liked Kalidasa's drama *Meghdut*, but he could not read Sanskrit. He wrote to friends all over India and Britain and finally acquired four different English versions. In 1957 he wrote to me when I was at the University of Manchester to ask people in the department of classical studies which were the best English versions of the great Greek tragedian dramatists. Luckily my own teacher and supervisor in the department of government, Professor W.J.M Mackenzie, had a first in classics from Oxford and had taught the subject at his college in Oxford before coming to Manchester. He mentioned two translations. Knowing my father, I requested him to consult his colleagues in the classics department to satisfy my father completely. He did even better and telephoned his teachers and colleagues at

Oxford and finally not only gave me a list of the best English versions but also helped me in procuring them. Father was greatly pleased. But Mackenzie was surprised at a Pakistani historian's such keen interest in ancient Greek drama, and I had to tell him about father's background and literary tastes.

Father was of the firm opinion – belief or conviction is a better word for what he thought – that the ultimate and the only unerring test of a man's claim to culture was the level and purity of his taste in poetry. This was the touchstone of the intellectual spirit residing within his self. If he likes poetry, can distinguish between verse and poetry, and enjoys good poetry, he has a right to be considered a man of taste. In his words, when God made man in His image .He put in his soul all his own qualities so that by developing them to the limit of his efforts he can understand his Maker. Pre-eminent among these attributes is the love of beauty, because above all God is Beauty. Poetry is the nearest approach to Divine Beauty, nearer than the best of the fine arts, because it rises above the use of gross matter in expressing that Beauty. Through mere words, which are nothing but vapours when spoken, it creates a loveliness which appeals to the noblest instincts of man.

He was deeply touched by a good couplet or poem. He repeated or recited it to himself many times. He had a good memory, and it shone best in the treasure of poetry he had stored in his mind. He knew thousands of couplets and passages by heart. I have met people whose store of learnt-by-rote verses in Persian and Urdu is rich, but very few who could recite so much English poetry from their recollected stock. Father had in his repertory not only short poems or passages from long poems from poets ranging from Milton to Swinburne but some very long passages from such poems as Tennyson's *In Memoriam*, of which he could recite from memory about three-quarters of the whole. Having lived with *Hir* for 30 years it is not surprising that he could "read" a good

part of it without looking at the book. When he heard or read a very good couplet or a lovely poem he found it so moving that in his own words "I find my heart melting or sometimes bursting with a feeling that I can't control".

Poetry and music are sister muses and their connection has been ordained by God. Hence Pythagoras's belief in the music of the spheres. The poet's idea reaches his audience through two means: the depth of the message and the beauty of the word. The beauty of the words does not lie only in their eloquence, arrangement and order but primarily and supremely in the musicality and resonance produced by the way in which they are employed to convey the poet's inspiration. Good poetry overwhelms our mind by its profundity of meaning and our heart by its melody. Music imparts to it the quality which releases an echo in the heart. And echo is itself a kind of music.

Therefore anyone who is affected by poetry is also enchanted by harmony and cadence. The rise and fall of music, and its modulation, tonality, concord and timing govern the beat of the heart and add to the power of sensing the unseen. The note, beat, rhythm and air of music set the heart on fire, give a new meaning to life, fresh truths dawn upon human comprehension, and the hearer enters a world where desire and fate are no longer rivals or adversaries, greed of mundane gains and fear of deprivation vanish, the burdens of mortal life are lifted, limits of diurnal time shrink so that a moment can become eternity, madness is turned into wisdom and understanding, thought takes wing, and imagination soars to unexplored vastnesses of the universe.

My father had a passion for poetry and a love for music. At some time of which I know nothing he had learnt how to sing with the accompaniment of a harmonium. I remember him singing Persian and Urdu ghazals till about 1942. After that his research and writing kept him chained to the desk and he had no time for this diversion. But he never lost his

love for music I have often seen tears in his eyes when he was listening to a good singer in a private gathering or in later years on the radio. While hearing the *Hir* being recited tunefully b a maestro of the art he cried unashamedly.

Once when he returned home from a sitting at which a great master had recited *Hir* I asked him if he had enjoyed it. His reply still reverberates in my mind. "What a question! What can I say? How can I give tongue to an unearthly feeling? How can I describe an experience which took me out of this gross world? The words of Waris Shah. No, it was not words. It was the wine of the finest bouquet served in a goblet of shimmering crystal. In it there was a flame as well as a melody, the burning of the one and the ecstasy of the other, the truth of this world as well as the Reality of the other world. The story had splendour and sublimity, the music a stately magnificence. The text was as old as time, the recitation as fresh as a rose in blossom. The story purified my heart, the music gladdened it. I felt like a man with bruised feet walking on a length of silk." When he was saying this he was shedding tears. (He spoke in Punjabi; the English version is mine).

I am neither a specialist in Mughal history nor at home in Punjabi poetry nor as well read as father was. Even without these handicaps I would not have been qualified to sit in judgement on his achievements or to comment on his learning and intellectual attainments. In any case, whatever I say in praise of him will be attributed to a son's filial partiality and duty. Let others judge him. I will confine myself to quoting only one man who stands tall in many fields of intellectual endeavour.

On 7 March 1948 Sir Abdul Qadir hosted an afternoon tea party at his residence to celebrate his son's marriage. Father, mother and I were invited. We arrived there at 3 P.M., mother went inside the house, father and I entered the front lawn where a number of tables were set for the guests.

We took our seats around one table meant for four persons, and the two other men already there were editors of prominent newspapers. After ten minutes Professor Ahmed Shah Bokhari, his usual well-dressed debonair self, entered the lawn. He was then principal of the Government College and was teaching English. After embracing Sir Abdul Qadir and offering him his felicitations he came to our table. I got up to my feet. He asked me to sit down, nodded at the editors, shook hands with father, smiled archly at the editors, and said to father, "Shaikh sahib, what a company of ignoramuses have you selected to be in. Come along. Let us find a quiet corner and talk of higher things. I am very busy these days and relish this hour of leisure". Father and he walked away to a table with only two chairs at the farthest side of the garden and sat down to talk. I went away to look for Riaz Qadir and finding him we made up our own group of youngsters.

Every ten minutes or so I looked towards the corner where Bokhari and father were sitting, fearing lest they should finish their *tête-à-tête* and father might be searching for me. Time passed. Half an hour. One hour. Perhaps more than that. The shades of evening began to fall. Guests began to leave. And then their talk came to an end. They shook hands and parted. I collected mother from the back of the house where ladies were being entertained. We left for home in a *tonga*. During the journey father did not say anything about his meeting with Bokhari.

Two days later in the college after Bokhari had finished his lecture and I was walking towards the door and he was taking out a cigarette from the case he called my name. I turned back and asked, "You want me, Sir?" He said yes and I went to him. By now all the students had left and the two of us were alone in the classroom. He took a long draw on the cigarette and then expelling the smoke in a long spiral said to me:

"You know I met your father the other day. We had so much to tell each other that we lost all sense of time. The talk spun like a top. I have rarely met a man whose wide study in so many fields matches his insight into so many points. If I had the authority, I would beg him to come here and lecture in my college. You know what I would do? I would appoint him a professor at large, free to lecture on any topic on any day. You are lucky. Try to emulate him. He is the best ideal you can have. Now go and read and read till what you read becomes a part of your life and mind."

Bokhari had no rival in the range of his intellect and the depth of his insight in literary matters. He had the eye of an eagle and the heart of a poet. He was the author of only one book, but that one single slim volume had taken him to the summit of the Parnassus of the genre where he still stands unapproached and unchallenged. His oratory was spellbinding. He gave meanings to words which were hidden from others. His pen brought elegance and grace to whatever he wrote. He lifted prose to its rightful place, next to poetry. His speech had the scent of roses. His lectures vouchsafed us a new vision and opened the way to fresh understanding. His brain emitted flashes of lightning, making the obscure clear, the clear lucent. If this man sang praises of my father he must have had good reasons for it.

There was a strong touch of mysticism in my father's thinking, speculation and approach to religion and literature. Let me remove any possible misunderstanding right away. He was not a Sufi in the conventional sense of the title. He did not belong to any school, path or circle. He looked at *piri-muridi* as associationism (*shirks*). But he found much to admire and imbibe in ancient and medieval Sufi thinkers. He was one of the lovers of Mansur Al-Hallaj. That explains his infatuation with Persian and Punjabi poetry, in his opinion the two greatest repositories of mysticism in song and rhyme.

Father approached and studied the story of Hir in its mystical spirituality because it fitted in with his own ideas

about poetry and passion. He loved the story; he adored the poem. He looked at Waris Shah as a supreme teacher of unearthly wisdom, of a sapience that crosses mundane limits and rises to the stars. The swelling self-assertion of the sage lifted mere romance to a level where the veils of Reality parted one by one. His tongue recited the syllables of the spirit. He had a way with words which lifted the heart's weight. In a rhythmic run of syllables he painted a riot of emotional conceptions. His arsenal of ideas was inexhaustible. Sometimes truth dropped from his lips like bitter cherries, and he cried out in pain against the cruelty of the feudal lord, the conventions of a hidebound society, the exploitation of the simple, sincere Muslim by the wily, ignorant and arrogant mulla, the rapine and plunder of the land of five rivers by the Afghan marauders. There is the crash and blend of colours. There is the yearning lilt of the song. He gave something to all his readers to feel with every fibre of their being.

What is the secret that makes the story, as told, eternal? It educates man's discontent. It illustrates the general triumph of the soul over the body, of mind over matter, reason over will, knowledge over ignorance, truth over error, right over might, liberty over authority, light over darkness, dawn over dusk, day over night. It celebrates the love of which Jalaluddin Rumi sang as follows (in W. Hastie's version):

'Tis Love that twisteth every snare.
'Tis love that snapes the bond of sin.
Love sounds the music of the Spheres;
Love echoes through Earth's harshest din.
Love fills with fragrance Heaven's sweet Air;
Love's deft hands Life's gold Fibres spin.
The World is God's pure Mirror clear.
To eyes when free from Clouds within,
With Love's own Eyes the Mirror view,
And there see God to Self-akin.

It is the soul which reigns supreme in the story. In the clash between the notions which the mind conceives and the ideas which the soul has, between the beliefs which the tongue utters and the convictions which the psyche has, between the tenets of the mind and the endowments of the psyche – in this clash the soul refutes intelligence, and intelligence is proud of the defeat. The narrative is charged with lightning. It charts with consummate skill the changeful rhythm in human affairs. The lesson it teaches is, at times, the same which Ansari of Heart put in these words:

Know that he who desires the things of this world
Is haunted by sorrow.
He who desires heaven
Is a labourer working for wages.
But he who desires God
Is on the path of glory.

Waris Shah unrolls the ancient scroll of the love of God. His thoughts are no wards of time; they are eternal wisdom. The story presents what Kabir has called "the lamp of love that burns on the salver of knowledge". Kabir is again relevant:

For work has no other aim than the getting of knowledge:
When that comes, the work is put away.
The flower blooms for the fruit; when the fruit comes,
The Flower withers

The tale touches every fold and fallow of the field of life. Like good poetry it begins in delight and ends in delight and wisdom, wisdom born of sorrow. Sorrow sings the music of eternity. Men live and die; the song remains.

In my father's papers relating to *Hir* I found the following passage which might be his or a quotation (there is no indication) on the spiritual dimension of love.

"Love of a woman could be interpreted in mystic terms. The sight of the beauty reminds one of the presence of God, sometimes approaching religious ecstasy. Consciousness becomes sharper. Awareness heightens. One experiences an overwhelming euphoric state of consciousness. The face of the beloved becomes emblematic of God's beauty. It intensifies the sensibilities. The face is a medium for expressing the inexpressible. It gives a sense of communion with God – in which the individual and the cosmic meaning merge. In his personal devotedness to the woman, the man finds a paradigm of his love of God; a participation, on a concrete level, in that free responsiveness to ultimate beauty in which he discovers the meaning and significance of his life."

Whether a quotation or his own comment, perhaps written for the book on *Hir* and the sagas of the word, it reflects his interpretation of the love depicted in the story. In his view this reading of the poem ran like this. The characters of Hir and Ranjha are spiritual symbols, not a woman and a man of flesh and blood, like you and me. Ranjha and Hir did not "love" each other in the everyday sense of the term. Each loved God through the other. For Ranjha Hir was not a woman but an image of God by means of which he recognized the ultimate Reality. Hir's search was not for a lover but for Truth. She desired the sight of an epiphany. For Ranjha the arcs and curves of Hir's body did not arouse any worldly passion but put his doubts to sleep and awakened his faith. The two met but they were denied union. This was inevitable. Union kills desire, and desire is the driving force, the prime mover, the spur and stimulus of the soul. Ranjha's craving was a spring without an autumn. His ardour remained unfulfilled because it is the force which makes the heart beat, the pulse throb, inspires all visions, and sharpens sensitivity to a point where one can hear the footfall of a ray of light. Hir was the adoration of Ranjha's soul, a message from on high, a reflection of God. She was not a delight denied to him, nor a

rapture which eluded his grasp, but a symbol of unity amid multiplicity of images. Ranjha was perfecting his soul by loving Hir. The agony was great, but the reward everlasting.

That is how my father interpreted the story and read a spiritual meaning in it. He believed Hir to be the acme of symbolist poetry in world literature. Viewed like this Waris Shah was superior to Homer, Shakespeare, Dante and Goethe. Dante saw Beatrice at a street corner and many years later wrote his *Divine Comedy*. But Waris Shah wrote a poem in which the heroine was the human soul. No one else had written the biography of the soul in its full amplitude. Both Milton and Goethe show the soul struggling with Satan. They don't uncover it on the hurnan level, through an ordinary man and an ordinary woman; no longer ordinary in the hands of a master who was a Sufi. Waris Shah fixed the coping-store over the arch of imaginative literature. The edifice was complete. In the form of a tale man was told that the denizens of the lowly, apparently meaningless, earth can reach out to the stars, provided that their beloved is a message of God in human shape and their love is not of this world but unearthly. The drama is not played out on the stage of today and tomorrow but in the arena of the inner tumult of the soul and its final conciliation with its Maker. Such love ascends to become a search for God. What we call romance is transformed into worship. *Hir* is not the tale of a man and a woman, who are in love with each other, but the saga of a spiritual odyssey. It is not a story but a scripture.

A DEATH UNSUNG

That is how my dear father looked at the story of Hir. Now perhaps the reader will not ask himself or me why this sensible man gave 30 years of his life to the preparation of the text of the poem, and did not complain of his sufferings,

sacrifices, adversities, poverty, and the pains and agonies of the indifference of those who should have come to his help. His silence was his speech, but there was no one to hear and understand it. He uttered no word of protest. He worked all his life quietly and with devotion. He accomplished what he had set out to do and then quietly slipped away.

What he would and could have said he did not say. But I, who saw everything, have something to say. Let me give tongue to what he left unsaid.

When a country is defeated in a war its self-respect receives a jolt and it feels humiliated because its body or a part of it has crumbled. But when a scholar dies, a part of the soul of the nation shrivels and wilts. But we are strangers to such noble feelings.

My father called out for help; people thought he was a beggar. He needed assistance; people turned their back on him. He said "I am a seeker of knowledge; come and make my task easier". People answered by making his problems more insoluble. The fault lay in himself. He did not know the society he was living in. He did not worship the various and many suns which rose out of one horizon and with time set in the other horizon. He wrote no eulogies. He did not approach the ante-rooms of the mighty. He did not pay court to Authority. He had not bent before the ill wind of fortune; he did not know how to bow before the whippersnappers of the Establishment.

For these sins many taunts were hurled at him. People laughed at him and said that he did not know how to live in this world. He accomplished much in the field of learning. People said he was wasting his days in reading books and ruining his life by selling off ancestral property to finance his "hobby"; he is "a failure" in life. He wrote books on history; he found no publisher for them. He prepared the text of an epic; the self appointed commissars of Punjabi culture and language looked the other way. His first

publisher turned out to be a villain; after his death his *Hir* was pirated in one print after another. Once again the professors and scholars of Punjabi chose to close their eyes.

He was a worshipper at the shrine of his own soul and a votary of nothing but his work. People asked why he was not interested in the goodies of this world. He aspired to do much more and might have written many more books. People took his pen away. He lit the flame of his wisdom to show the path to enlightenment. People preferred their own crepuscular lives. He was poor in a world where the currency of gold ruled the roost. Again and again he shouted his plea "I want to work; give me a chance". An eloquent silence answered him, and he heard but the echo of his own words. He was a knowledge-intoxicated savant. People said he was out of his mind. He said knowledge leads those who have lost their way to the Promised Land. People said they had already reached their El Dorado and did not need knowledge. He said 'the poor is not he who has no means, but he who has no desire". People said "leave us to enjoy the world, for life comes one's way but once". He knocked at every door; none was opened to him.

At the end one day this old man – restless, infirm of body, indigent, deprived, unheard, silenced, breathless, bruised in mind, stricken by the slings and arrows of circumstance, with his ideals torn to shreds, he who uncovered the truth of many a word – tired of treading the stony, inhospitable byways and alley-ways of life, vanished from sight. He had walked through dust for many a year. At last that dust claimed him as its own. After life's fitful fever he sleeps under tons of soil – beyond the reach of all taunts, snubs and sneers of the world.

After having written this far I have stayed my hand. Reason has replaced emotion. Am I not a fool to say what I have said, to ask why and when the leader abandoned the led, and those who should have guided the nation aright left them in the lurch? That had happened a long time ago, and

many heroes had paid the price with their lives. Look what happened to Chaudhri Rahmat Ali, Abdullah Yusuf Ali, Ahmed Shah Bokhari, Abdus Salam and the other star-crossed and unblest. I will only talk about two of them.

Abdullah Yusuf Ali studied law at the University of Cambridge, entered the Indian Civil Service through the open examination in which he not only beat every other competitor in the subject of English composition but created a new record, wrote books on history and art, mastered the learning of the East and the West, ran the Islamia College of Lahore for many years, and crowned his achievements by preparing an English version of the Quran with a detailed commentary which stands unrivalled till today after 70 years and is the most widely-read English translation in the world.

How did the Muslims treat him? His first principalship of Islamia College ended in his humiliation and resignation because his life was made difficult by the Anjuman-i-Himayat-i-Islam, some Mulsim newspapers of Lahore and the remnants of the rowdy wings of the Khilafat movement. During his second tenure, in which he finished his translation and commentary of the Quran, it was the newly established provincial Mulsim League which, along with the Anjuman, disapproved of his connections with the Punjab Unionist Party and forced him to leave.

The publisher of his Quran, Shaikh Muhammad Ashraf of Lahore, who specialized in issuing Islamic literature and was proud of it, did not pay him any royalties and must have made his pile.

Misfortune dogged his steps even after his death. In about 1966 (no date is given in the volume), the Dar-ul-Liwaa of Riyadh published his Quran with an introduction by of all the people Abul 'Ala Maududi. It was reprinted several times in the Lebanon, India, Britain and the United States. In 1983 another edition was published by the Amana Corporation, Brentwood, Maryland, U.S.A., and it was claimed that the

Corporation had the copyright. It was distributed by the Al-Rajhi Company of Saudi Arabia. It published a "New Revised Edition" in 1989 in co-operation with the International Institute of Islamic Thought, U.S.A. This edition contained amendments to both the translation and the commentary. The editors responsible for the "revision" were not named. Professor Hamidullah, the distinguished Islamic scholar, protested that altering the original work without permission set a dangerous precedent. "The right way would have been", he wrote, "in the case of need, to reproduce the original text and add a footnote to say that the new editor suggests this or that word or opinion". Undeterred, the Amana Corporation put forth another "New Edition with revised Translation and Commentary" in 1992, in which extra material was added to the commentary notes. The publisher's note was signed by Fakhri al-Barzingi, president of the Corporation. Both the Amana editions contained a biographical note on Abdullah Yusuf Ali containing several errors.

Since 1990 the "new edition" has been printed and reprinted several times under the title of *The Holy Quran; An English Translation of the Meanings and Commentary*, revised and edited by the Presidency of Islamic Researches, Ifta, Call and Guidance, King Fahd Holy Quran Printing Complex, Medina. The editors have not indicated the changes or the places where these have been made. The original appendices, the preface and rhythmic commentary have been excluded. The chapters have been renumbered with the Arabic system, but cross-references to them in the commentary notes still use the Roman system. The removal of cross-references to appendices has also left some commentary notes incomprehensible. The preface says the original text was finalized "by adopting the most accurate expression where needed, besides checking the notes vigilantly so as to clear any misconceptions regarding the articles of faith, varying juristic opinions and thoughts not in

conformity with the sound Islamic point of view". Abdullah Yusuf Ali's name does not appear on the title page, but is mentioned in an obscure place in the preface. Hundreds of thousands of copies of this mangled, distorted and bowdlerized work have been printed and distributed free throughout the world. The printing and distribution continue.

Abdullah Yusuf Ali's end was as pathetic as his life's work. He had been living in London since his departure from India. On the evening of 9 December 1953 the police found him sitting on the steps of a house in Westminster. They took him to the local hospital where he spent the night. On the 10th the hospital discharged him and a police constable left him in a nearby London County Council home for the elderly in Dovehouse Street, Chelsea, and the police informed the Pakistan High Commission. On the same day the High Commissioner, Mirza Abol Hassan Ispahani, sent an urgent dispatch to the Prime Minister of Pakistan, Muhammad Ali Bogra, saying:

"I write to you in connection with a person known to me and respected . . . . by the Muslims the world over for the great services he has rendered to Islam . . . . I have just now learned that this venerable old man is in financial straits. He has been found sitting in Trafalgar Square in tattered clothes on a suitcase having no money in his pocket. He has been taken to the London County Council Poor Home and we have been informed of his condition. Although, as you know, Government does not place a cent at the disposal of Heads of Missions to meet any emergent and deserving case, I have, on my own responsibility, asked Hyder, my Counsellor, to render such assistance as is necessary in providing him with a cheap room and food.

I appeal to you to consider this case with the sympathy it deserves and have Government sanction a small allowance which should be sufficient to keep him in a cheap boarding house and let him live the few years of his life that still

remain unexpended, in reasonable comfort. He also needs, of course, some clothes. You will agree that the grant of an allowance of a few pounds, say 20 per month, by Government should not be a financial burden . . . . If a precedent is required, I may cite the case of poet Nasrul [Nazrul] Islam of East Pakistan who has, for some years, been receiving a substantial pension from Government for service he has rendered to poetry and literature.

As the request is urgent, I shall be most grateful if sanction is conveyed to me, if possible by return of bag."

Fortunately, Abdullah Yusuf Ali could not wait for the Pakistani charity to arrive; "fortunately" because the dying man was saved the indignity of spending his last few days in a "cheap room" rented by the Pakistan government. His condition was deteriorating by the hour, and on the day the letter was written (10 December) he breathed his last in St. Stephen's Hospital in Fulham at 8 P. M.

It is time to ask some questions. Why was Ispahani not in touch with him during his last weeks? They knew each other well, they had been at the same College in Cambridge (St. John's). Knowing his critical condition why had Ispahani to write to the government for help, well aware that the administrative machinery took its time to allocate funds even in cases of dire emergency? Ispahani was a millionaire in his own right. Why didn't he take Abdullah Yusuf Ali to his own official residence of palatial proportions and look after him? If that was not possible, why didn't he arrange matters for the sick man from his own pocket and send him to a good hotel and buy some cloths for him? His references to Abdullah Yusuf Ali are insulting: "a person known to me", "providing him with a cheap room and food", "to keep him in a cheap boarding house", "the poor man died", etc.

Since his death nobody remembers him, though a vast majority of the educated elite in all countries read his Quran every morning. He still awaits a proper biographer.

His historical works have not been reprinted. His scattered writings, which are considerable, have not been traced, collected, edited and published. (I started work on this project in Cambridge in 1996, but was forced to abandon it for lack of resources). So much for Abdullah Yusuf Ali.

Professor Ahmed Shah Bokhari (Patras Bokhari to the Urdu-reading public) was a giant among pigmies in every field that he cared to enter. He shone the brightest in oratory, literature and diplomacy. When he spoke in Urdu the best men of letters in the language were consumed with envy or jealousy. When he lectured in the classroom his students were vouched a new understanding of the subject. Veteran journalists who had covered world events and international conferences agreed that the speeches he delivered at the United Nations were among the finest made from that rostrum. He was an essayist of supreme genius, using old words to create a new universe in which humour jostles with intelligence and grace with mischief.

Earlier he had earned a first in English literature at Emmanuel College, Cambridge (one of the few Asians to do so), taught at Government College, Lahore, ran the All India Radio network, acted as principal of his old college, represented Pakistan at the United Nations, and served as Under-Secretary for Informational at the U.N. Secretariat, where he died in harness.

What did we do to him? When he returned to Lahore in early 1947 as principal of Government College he soon felt as if he had come to a hostile country. The best in the Punjab academia succumbed to the green-eyed monster, because his arrival boded ill for them: it darkened their prospects for professional advancement and eclipsed their tinsel and hollow reputation. The authorities of the university and the Oriental College were in the van of this disgruntled pack of hounds. He was disappointed. Then the Pakistani government picked him up to accompany Prime Minister

Liaquat Ali Khan and his wife in their official tour of the United States. Agha Abdul Hamid, an old student of Bokhari's and an ICS officer, was to write the lady's speeches and Bokhari the prime minister's. These speeches won plaudits and were soon published in the United States as a book entitled *The Heart of Asia*. Sayyid Amjad Ali told me that Bokhari did not receive even a formal routine "thank you" letter from the prime minister, which saddened him.

A little later he was appointed Pakistan's permanent representative at the United Nations. In this capacity he made speeches which created history. The United States was in favour of abolishing the U.N. International Children Emergency Fund on the ground that after the end of the World War it was no longer needed. In the meeting called to consider the American move Mrs. Eleanor Roosevelt, the American chief delegate, made her case in a long speech, and it seemed as if the last word had been spoken, the issue decided, and only the formality of voting for the demise of the Fund remained on the agenda. At this stage Bokhari intervened and spoke extempore for half an hour, making the points that the Fund was not meant to help only the European children who had been the victims of the war, that millions of children in Asia and Africa were in a far more unfortunate plight, and that considerations of the colour of the skin in such a global humanitarian problem were neither politic nor ethical. The speech was so moving and persuasive that the delegates voted overwhelmingly for retaining the Fund and providing money for it. Eye-witness reporters wrote in their despatches that Eleanor Roosevelt was seen crying tears of frustration and humiliation. With one speech Bokhari had saved the UNICEF and the future of numberless children. The international press cheered Bokhari to the echo. There was no word of commendation from the Pakistan Foreign Office.

Then Bokhari made his greatest speech in the Security Council on the Tunisian issue, which took the house by storm

and the American press wrote laudatory editorial comments. Immediately after attaining independence the Tunisian government, out of its gratitude to him, named a major boulevard in Tunis after him. How did his superiors in Karachi react? First they issued orders posting him to a relatively obscure capital. For some unknown reason the orders were cancelled. But soon the Foreign Office demoted him from the rank of an ambassador to that of a minister. That was the government's reward for Bokhari's acclaimed achievement. Mad with frustration he wrote to his old friend Abdul Majid Salik asking him to speak to the Governor General, Malik Ghulam Muhammad, whom Salik knew intimately.

When told the story, the Governor General was furious and summoned Zafrullah Khan, the Foreign Minister, and asked him to explain the infamous decision. Zafrullah said the action had been taken as a part of an economy drive under way in the Foreign Office. Ghulam Muhammad laughed at the lame excuse. Known for his fits of rage, genuine or feigned, and his store of cutting Punjabi abuses, and not one to spare words or anyone's finer feelings, he told Zafrullah the real reason, of which he was aware, flung at him a couple of choice Punjabi scurrilities from his rich repertory, and ordered that Bokhari shall retain his present rank of ambassador. This was told to me by Salik himself and later confirmed by Agha Abdul Hamid. There is also a brief reference to the episode in Bokhari's published letters.

When Bokhari retired from Pakistan's service in 1953 the United Nations Secretary General, Dag Hammarskjold, insisted that he should accept the appointment of Under-Secretary for Information at the Secretariat. Bokhari agreed, the two men struck up a good friendship, and Bokhari was Hammarskjold's close confidant till his own death in 1958. Before the end of his tenure he began to write to his friends in Pakistan, saying he was anxious to return to Pakistan and had some fresh ideas in the field of education which he wanted to put into practice and

observe the results. When his suggestions were conveyed to the people in authority in the government and at the universities they were spurned. There was no place for him in his country. He accepted a professorship of English literature at Columbia University, but died before he could take it up.

Thus died of a shattered heart the man who had embellished the world of letters with his pen, given a new meaning to eloquence, won many diplomatic triumphs, produced in his college in the 1930s an array of brilliant men, licked into shape in the broadcasting service a whole generation of dramatists, playwrights, poets, essayists and literary critics, won fame as a writer and a teacher, and brought honour to his college, his profession and his country. How much he suffered comes, out, though in muted accents, in his letters published in the special number on him issued by the Lahore Urdu journal *Naqoosh*.

Did anyone protest or feel embarrassed or speak out? No. The dead are very dead. And so many more die every day. The living have other things to do.

These stories will not please those who decide the future and fate of others. But some one at some time has to tell the truth. It is not wise to tie one's tongue and call it prudence. Our silence will not change our history, because history is unforgiving and acts the final arbiter.

The reality from which we are all running away is that our age of intellectual Lilliputians, manikins and weaklings cannot bear the sight of true human greatness. Though it will bow before Power, and cringe before Money, it will not honour Truth. The blind are leading the blind. Ignorance is armed to the teeth, and is impregnable, grim and unyielding, and drunk with arrogance. Learning is vulnerable and unshielded, and levelled to the ground. Honour has left these men as fast as water passes through a sieve.

At this point another thought invades the mind – an appalling, hideous and hair-raising thought. Suppose any one of

Abdullah Yusuf Ali, Bokhari or Abdul Aziz were a good test cricketer or a star hockey player, what dividends would have come their way. In their lives all the three would have been honoured, decorated with awards, lionised, glorified as heroes, exalted as great Pakistanis, eulogized and photographed by every newspaper, appointed to highly-paid sinecures, given cash rewards, allotted residential plots, and in other ways indulged and pampered. On their death there would have been long obituary notices in every newspaper and editorials in some, the rulers of the country would have sent messages of condolence to their families, and everyone who was anyone would have issued statements expressing his regret and sorrow.

This is not a flight of fancy. All this has been happening for many years now. And it continues. As reported in *Dawn* of 22 May 2003 President General Pervez Musharraf encouraged sportsmen by "announcing mouth-watering cash incentives". He awarded Rs.0.2 million to each member of the national hockey team, and promised a package of Rs.20 million for the team if they won the next year's Olympic crown; a victory in any other Asian level tournament would fetch the squad Rs.10 million. The newspaper recalled that in February he had said that any player wining a gold medal at the Olympic games would get Rs.10 million and Asian winner Rs.5 million.

In August 2003 the government awarded Ahmed Shah Bokhari, 45 years after his death, a decoration, but not the highest. The highest went to the maker of a weapon of mass destruction. To facilitate the murder of millions is a higher achievement than creating immortal literature.

The priorities have been firmly fixed, and we live by them. To write a commentary on the Quran and prepare a translation which defies time or to be a great man of letters and teacher or to be an outstanding historian and editor of epics is of no consequence to the nation.

In a country where mental achievements and intellect are not recognized only the rich flourish. Learning and research

and poetry do not count. Words lose their value, character, weight and worth. This tragedy raises no eyebrows. The eye loses its sight, the heart its insight. Nobody remembers that the real glory of power lies in the humility of the dervish, not in the insolence and pride of the Pharaohs, suzerains, kings and rulers of the world. The philistines are proud of their ignorance. The rich are engrossed in singing and hearing their own praises. Wisdom has lost the game. Noble desires have died a natural death. The ignorant are in the ascendant and command respect. The teachers lose their esteem. Self-respect is forced to become a beggar. The tongue is tied, and the pen manacled. The caravan of knowledge is wandering aimlessly without any guide. The contumely of the self-styled guardians of culture and learning is nauseating, but they enjoy the power to define and lay down the values for the nation. The great who died are nothing but forgotten history. The successful who live are the heroes of the hour. Culture is dead. Long live culture!

That has always been so, and so it was when my father lived. The commissars of culture smiled the smile of fatuous self-satisfaction. They could indulge in the pleasure because they were riding the tides of conquest. But they had power without purpose. They felt naked without prejudice and unarmed without intolerance. Calumny was the favoured weapon of these sceptred clowns. These monuments of vanity elevated their myopia to the level of a doctrine. Pretence soon becomes conviction. The coroneted intellectual blockheads had vinegar in their veins. No lamp lighted the gloom of this world.

Such were the times and conditions is which my father worked and laboured and lost his dreams. His desires became dust. His mornings were not the harbingers of a shining day but the Cassandras of twilight. He neither cried out because of pain nor complained of suffering. Who would listen to him? He dangled from his cross without hope of resurrection. He was surrounded by Pharaohs. There was no Moses in sight.

Our last meeting was unforgettable and heart-rending. I was with him on Monday, 22 June 1970, from 3.30 to 5 P.M. I saw that his robe of flesh had worn thin. For several years good fortune had clouded him with a relentlessness which savoured of actual malice. But he still wore self-sufficiency like an armour, defending himself against self-doubt, complacency, bitterness and other traits which betray human weakness. I found that his mind, lit by the light of truth, was still as clear as crystal. Though caught on the sorrowful wheel of disappointment his ardour for poetry had not grown cold and died. He recited to me a few couplets of 'Urfi and Sa'ib and asked me which book I was then writing. Even his sunset years were of contentment and of small but precious pleasures. He was in the evening tide of life, but still with knee unbent.

I can't recall the Persian couplets he had recited to me, but I noticed, without then giving it a thought, that all of them dealt with eternity, the next world and the immortality of soul. There was a pattern to them and he had not chosen them at random. He must have noticed that the message he wanted to convey obliquely had not come through. I was still telling him about the book I was writing when he interrupted me.

"Khurshid Jan, there is a piece of English poetry we read together many years ago. I wonder if you can recall it. 'I strove . . . .'"

"I can", I replied, and began to recite the opening line. He stopped me with a gesture of his hand.

"Don't It's coming back to me. The whole of it. Now listen:

I strove with none, for none was worth my strife,
Nature I loved and, next to Nature, Art:
I warm'd both hands before the fire of life;
It sinks, and I am ready to depart.

Isn't that marvellous. Walter Savage Landor. Not a poet of the first rank by any standard; not even of the second. But these lines are glorious. Don't you think so?"

The message now came through, loud and clear.

Not content with that, he said,

"Let's recite it together. As we used to do when you were young."

And then we recited the four lines together, like two children, like two innocent souls. But the souls were no longer innocent. The declaration was no longer wrapped in mist, but as clear as running water. He was telling me that he was going away and this was our last meeting. Before I could express any reaction he added to my agony.

"Do you miss your mother?"

"But of course."

"How much?"

"I can't tell you. There are things where all words are dumb. As I said in my book dedicated to her, beyond all sense of language."

"You make me happy. That is as it should be. She is unforgettable."

His words ripped through the air and stabbed my heart. With an iron control I stopped myself from crying. There was a beautiful look of peace on his face That helped. I kept my composure. He looked straight into my eyes as if reminding me that I should not forget our last conversation. I never did.

Then he talked of other things but in his eyes there was a far-away look as if he was gazing beyond me towards a horizon which summoned from the deep recesses of his mind memories and thoughts which had no tongue to speak. He had conveyed his premonition in the language of categorical imperatives. For the remaining half an hour that I was with him I stared at his face which was a benediction, trying to etch its every fold and feature on the tablet of my mind. I knew I would not see it again, and the thought broke my heart.

When we parted he was smiling. He held me in a tight embrace, chest to chest, kissed me on the forehead, and shook hands with me with a firm hold.

Our final farewell.

Three hours later my wife and I flew out of Lahore. We returned to Khartoum and life resumed its normal routine. But I began to write to father more frequently. Though very weak and with shaky hands and bad eyesight, he wrote to me as long as he could. On 9 August he wrote to me:

Khurshid dear,

During the last week or ten days [1] have received no less than three (3) [letters], the last one coming on 7th. Good of you this!

I have nothing to say in reply.

This is my first attempt to write. I hope you will find my writing legible, my next letter will show better result if you encourage me this time.

I received my monthly allowance yesterday. Many thanks for the same.

Effetely. Yours, Abdul Aziz

P.S Pardon all mistakes.

His next letter dated 25 October was not in his hand but the last words "Effetely. Yours, Abdul Aziz" were written by him. The letter read:

Khurshid dear,

Your letter dated 15th reached here a few days go [*sic.*] Please accept my thanks.

Every thing is right at this end.

I hope you are both well.

My regards to Zarrina.

Effetely yours,

Abdul Aziz

Surprisingly the whole of his last letter dated 10 November was written by himself and the inscription was firm and steady. It reached me on the 15^{th}.

It ran:

Khurshid darling,

Your letter dated 15 October reached here all right. I am much worried and anxious about your health. Your silence for a long time has worried me & made me very anxious. Please write to me at your earliest & be regular in your correspondence with me in future. And write to me every fortnight without fail.

My eyesight continues bad & I am writing this letter with much difficulty.

I hope you are both well.

My kind regards to Zarrina.

Are you fasting, you & your wife.

I am receiving your Allowance regularly. Thank you very much.

Afftely yours
Abdul Aziz

There is in Lahore a road called Poonch Road which connects Chauburji with Samanabad. From it branches off a street called Firdausi Street. In this lane there used to stand a modest single-storeyed house built of red bricks, numbered 15. This was my sister Razia's residence and father was living with her.

In early December he felt unwell. He was not suffering from any disease. He was old and weak and the end was near. He was confined to bed for a week. Slowly the light of life, now fluttering, sank in shade. One hour after the midnight between 15 (Tuesday) and 16 (Wednesday) December, in his sleep, he quietly and peacefully slipped into eternity. He was then exactly 40 days short of his 87^{th} birthday.

He was buried on the late morning of the 16th in the family yard in the Mianisahib graveyard. The funeral procession consisted of about a dozen male relatives and an equal number of neighbours.

On the 17th two telegrams reached me together, one about his critical condition and the other about his death. There was no point in rushing to Lahore. By now he would be in his grave. My wife and I wept bitterly and mourned him, each trying to solace the other. He was old and in no position to help me if I needed any help, and yet for several months I felt painfully vulnerable and completely unprotected. Sometimes I still have this feeling and become for a few minutes a child crying in the night for a light which has gone out for ever.

Since my Batala days I had often heard my father reciting to himself a Persian couplet. I arranged for it to be carved on his tombstone:

Ba'd az wafàt tubat-i-mà bar zamin maju,
Dar sịnahài mardum-i-àrif mazàr-i-màst
(After my death don't look for my grave on this earth,
You will find my last resting place in the hearts of Those Who Know)

Like his dear friend Abdullah Yusuf Ali, my father too was not allowed peace even after his death. About 15 years ago a brand new fake shrine had sprung up in Mianisahib graveyard and occupied a large area by destroying the existing tombs. My family's court lay next to the wall of the shrine. Every time I visited the graveyard I begged the guardians of the shrine not to encroach on our court. I spent the summer of 2002 in Murree. On my return, I found the precincts of the shrine had been expanded and all the family graves demolished to make room for a large platform for the use of the visitors to the "saint's" tomb.

I sat at the edge of a nearby tomb and cried. I was helpless. The dead had devoured the dead. The graves of

my father, his only brother, his daughter Razia, his three sisters, his brother's eldest son – all were gone.

When I had chosen the Persian couplet for the tombstone I could not have foreseen that it would come true literally. Now one cannot look for my father's grave anywhere on this earth. And I have been denied the consolation of visiting his last resting place and praying for his soul. That is the world we live in, the cruel, pitiless, beastly world of the shrine worshippers of the Islamic Republic.

His sufferings died with him; the work he did abides.

APPENDIX I

IMPORTANT DATES

1616	ABDUL BAQI born.
1659	ABDUS SHAHAB born.
1678	ABDUL WAHID born.
1699	ABDUL BAQI dies.
1703	KHALIFA AHMAD born.
1717	ABDUS SHAHAB dies.
1750	MIAN AHMAD born.
1752	ABDUL WAHID dies.
1770	EXUDDIN born.
1775	SHIHABUDDIN born.
1799	KHALIFA AHMAD dies.
1800	WAZIRUDDIN born (son of Exuddin).
1820	MIAN AHMAD dies.
1825	SHIHABUDDIN moves to Mukeian.
1835	AZIZUDDIN born (son of Waziruddin & Zuhra).
1840	EXUDDIN dies.

1845	SHIHABUDDIN dies.
1852	GHULAM NABI born (son of Waziruddin & Zuhra).
1857	KHAIRUDDIN born.
1859	GHULAM QADIR born (son of Waziruddin & Zuhra).
1862	GHULAM MUHAMMAD born (son of Waziruddin & Zuhra).
1866	AZIZUDDIN marries Sharfunnisa.
1866 (?)	PIRANDITTI born.
1870	GHULAM NABI marries Nurunnisa.
1871	MUHAMMAD HUSAIN born (son of Azizuddin & Sharfunnisa).
1872 August 3	WAZIRUDDIN dies.
1872 September 29	BARKAT born (daughter of Ghulam Nabi & Nur).
1873 May	GHULAM NABI graduates from the Punjab Medical School.
1874 October 26	FATIMA born (daughter of Ghulam Nabi & Nur).
1876 September	FAMILY moves from Kahnuwan to Batala.
1876 October 21	WAZIR born (daughter of Ghulam Nabi & Nur).

1876 November	The Khundawala haveli purchased in Batala.
1878 April 13	AMNA born (daughter of Ghulam Nabi & Nur).
1879	GHULAM NABI posted to Banda.
1879	AKBAR HUSAIN born (son of Azizuddin & Sharfunnisa).
1880	GHULAM QADIR enters revenue service in North Western Provinces; posted to Dodhi.
1880	GHULAM QADIR marries Piranditti.
1880	GHULAM MUHAMMAD marries.
1880	AZIZUDDIN separates from Sharfunnisa and marries Fazl Bibi.
1881 September	ALLAH RAKHI born (daughter of Ghulam Nabi & Nur).
1882	GHULAM NABI posted to Peshawar.
1882	NAWAB born (daughter of Ghulam Muhammad & his first wife).
1884 January 24	ABDUL AZIZ born (son of Ghulam Nabi & Nur).
1885	GHULAM NABI resigns his Peshawar job and starts living in Batala.
1886 January 1	UMRAO born (daughter of Ghulam Nabi & Nur).

1886 February 2	ZAINAB born (daughter of Ghulam Qadir & Piranditti).
1887	GHULAM NABI enters the service of Bahawalpur.
1888 November 1	ABDUL HAMID born (son of Ghulam Qadir & Piranditti).
1888 November 2	BARKAT (daughter of Ghulam Nabi) marries Muhammad Husain (son of Azizuddin).
1888 November 3	FATIMA (daughter of Ghulam Nabi) marries Khairuddin.
1888 November 4	WAZIR (daughter of Ghulam Nabi & Nur) marries Muhammad Umar.
1889	WAZIR gets a divorce from Muhammad Umar
1889	SARDAR born (daughter of Barkat and Shah Din).
1889 October 21	ABDUL HAMID born (son of Ghulam Nabi & Nur).
1891	SULTAN born (daughter of Ghulam Nabi & Nur).
1891 January 15	IQBAL born (daughter of Fatima & Khairuddin).
1891 August 11	SARDAR born (daughter of Barkat & Muhammad Husain).
1892	AHMAD HASAN I born (son of Fatima & Khairuddin).

1892	AMIR born (daughter of Barkat & Muhammad Husain).
1892 March 2	KULSUM born (daughter of Ghulam Qadir & Piranditti).
1892 December 16	SALAMATULLAH born (husband of Khurshid, daughter of Ghulam Muhammad).
1894	ABDUL WAHID born (husband of Firoz, daughter of Ghulam Muhammad).
1894 April 22	ABDUL MAJID born (son of Ghulam Qadir & Piranditti) (the date may be 10 May).
1895	GHULAM MUHAMMAD (son of Waziruddin) marries Amir.
1896 June 1	GHULAM DASTAGIR born (son of Barkat and Shah Din).
1897	GHULAM NABI resigns his Bahawalpur post and settles in Batala.
1897	ABDUR RAHMAN born (son of Ghulam Muhammad & Amir).
1897 October	UMRAO (daughter of Ghulam Nabi & Nur) marries Akbar Husain (son of Azizuddin & Shasrfunnisa).
1897 October	ALLAH RAKHI (daughter of Ghulam Nabi and Nur) marries Muhammad Husain (son of Faqir Ali).
1897 October	AMNA (daughter of Ghulam Nabi & Nur) marries Hakimuddin.

1898	GHULAM NABI starts medical practice in Amritsar.
1898	NAWAB born (daughter of Fatima & Khairuddin).
1898 August 12	AMNA dies (daughter of Ghulam Nabi & Nur, and wife of Hakimuddin).
1899	UMMAT-UL-HABIB born (daughter of Barkat & Shah Din).
1899 April 3	FIROZ born (daughter of Ghulam Muhammad & Amir).
1899 July 5	ABDUR RASHID born (son of Ghulam Qadir & Piranditti). (the year may have been 1898).
1900	GHULAM NABI abandons his medical practice in Amritsar and returns to Batala.
1900	ABDUR RAHMAN dies (son of Ghulam Muhammad & Amir).
1900	NAWAB dies (daughter of Ghulam Muhammad & his first wife).
1900 December	MUHAMMAD HASAN born (son of Fatima & Khairuddin).
1901	MUHAMMAD SADIQ born (son of Barkat & Muhammad Husain).
1901 October 23	HAKIM JAN born (son of Ghulam Muhammad & Amir).
1902	AHMAD HASAN I dies (son of Fatima & Khairuddin).

1902	SARDAR (daughter of Barkat & Shah Din) marries Ghulam Jilani (the year may have been 1903).
1903	MUHAMMAD ZAHID born (husband of Mumtaz, daughter of Ghulam Muhammad).
1903 March	AHMAD HASAN II born (son of Fatima & Khairuddin).
1903 March	ABDUL AZIZ (son of Ghulam Nabi & Nur) marries Zainab (daughter of Ghulam Qadir & Piranditti).
1903 November 7	BASHIR AHMAD born (husband of Razia).
1904	MAHMUD I born (son of Abdul Aziz & Zainab).
1904	AMIR (daughter of Barkat & Muhammad Hūsain) marries Zuhurul Haq
1904	SULTAN MAHMUD born (son of Sardar & Ghulam Jilani).
1904 August 4	KHURSHID born (daughter of Ghulam Muhammad & Amir).
1904 September	ABDUL AZIZ (son of Ghulam Nabi & Nur) leaves for England.
1905	GHULAM NABI enters the service of Afghanistan.
1905	KULSUM (daughter of Ghulam Qadir and Piranditti) marries Muhammad Hayat.

1905	HABIB born (daughter of Fatima & Khairuddin).
1906	MAHMUD I dies (son of Abdul Aziz & Zainab).
1906	KULSUM dies (daughter of Ghulam Qadir & Piranditti, and wife of Muhammad Hayat).
1906	GHULAM MUHAMMAD enters the service of Afghanistan.
1906 November 22	SUGHRA born (wife of Hakim Jan).
1907	AZIZ born (daughter of Sardar & Ghulam Jilani).
1908	SADIQ HUSAIN born (son of Allah Rakhi & Muhammad Husain).
1908	IQBAL (daughter of Fatima & Khairuddin) marries Dr. Muhammad Sharif.
1908 January 4	Jamil Hasan born (son of Fatima & Khairuddin).
1908 September	ABDUL AZIZ returns from England and starts legal practice in Rangoon.
1908 December 30	HAMID (son of Ghulam Qadir & Piranditti) marries Sardar (daughter of Barkat & Muhammad Husain).
1909	MAHMUD II born (son of Abdul Aziz & Zainab).
1909 January 14	MUMTAZ born (daughter of Ghulam Muhammad & Amir).

1909 September	SARDAR dies (daughter of Barkat & Muhammad Husain, and wife of Abdul Hamid).
1910	MAHMUD II dies (son of Abdul Aziz & Zainab).
1911	ABDUL AZIZ moves from Rangoon to Hissar.
1911	IQBAL born (daughter of Barkat & Shah Din, and wife of Abdul Majid).
1911 March 6	FARRUKH born (wife of Abdul Hamid, son of Ghulam Nabi).
1911 July 17	AKHTAR born (daughter of Abdul Aziz & Zainab).
1911 November 26	SHAH DIN dies (husband of Barkat & father of Sardar).
1912	ABDUR RAHMAN I born (son of Abdul Aziz & Zainab).
1912	GHULAM AHMAD GUL born (son of Ghulam Muhammad & Amir).
1912	SHARFUNNISA dies (wife of Azizuddin).
1912 August 14	GHULAM HASAN born (son of Fatima & Khairuddin).
1913	ABDUR RAHMAN I dies (son of Abdul Aziz & Zainab).
1913	YUSUF GHAZNAVI born (son of Sardar & Ghulam Jilani).

1913 November 1	MUHAMMAD BASHIR KHAN MAlIK born (husband of Bilquis Hamid).
1914	FIDA HUSAIN born (son of Allah Rakhi & Muhammad Husain).
1914	FIROZ (daughter of Ghulam Muhammad & Amir) marries Abdul Wahid.
1914	HANIFA born (daughter of Amir & Zuhurul Haq).
1914	GHULAM QADIR (son of Waziruddin & Zuhra) retires from Dodhi and settles in Batala.
1914 August 2	IQBAL dies (daughter of Fatima & Khairuddin and wife of Dr. Sharif).
1915	ABDUR RAHMAN II born (son of Abdul Aziz & Zainab).
1915	SULEMAN KHAN born (son of Sardar & Ghulam Jilani).
1915 July 12	NURUNNISA dies (wife of Ghulam Nabi).
1915 August 2	NAWAB dies (daughter of Fatima & Khairuddin).
1916	MAHMUDA born (daughter of Fatima & Khairuddin).
1916	MAHMUDA born (daughter of Muhammad Hayat & Zainab).
1916	MUNAWWAR born (daughter of Barkat & Muhammad Husain).

1916	IQBAL QURESHI born (husband of Anwar Hamid).
1916 January	ABDUL AZIZ moves from Hissar to Montgomery.
1916 February	RAZIA born (daughter of Abdul Aziz & Zainab).
1916 April 2	GHULAM DASTAGIR (son of Sardar and Ghulam Jilani) marries Ummat.
1916 May	HAMID (son of Ghulam Nabi & Nur) enters the Punjab Civil Service.
1916 May 20	ABDUL MAJID (son of Ghulam Qadir & Piranditti) marries Habib.
1916 September	HAMID (son of Ghulam Nabi & Nur) marries Sardar of Wazirabad.
1916 October 7	GHULAM QADIR dies (son of Waziruddin & Zuhra).
1916 November 16	ENAIT KIBRIA born (son of Firoz & Abdul Wahid).
1916 December 9	ZUHRA dies (wife of Waziruddin).
1917	GHULAM NABI resigns the Afghan job.
1917	ABDUR RAHMAN II dies (son of Abdul Aziz & Zainab).
1917	MAHMUD born (son of Hamid & Sardar).
1917	ZIAUL HAQ (YUSUF) born (son of Amir & Zuhurul Haq).

1917 January 10	UMRAO dies (daughter of Ghulam Nabi & Nur, and wife of Akbar Husain).
1917 October 1	FAHMIDA born (daughter of Ghulam Muhammad & Amir) (the date may be 21 October).
1917 October 25	GHULAM SARWAR born (husband of Nasim Hamid).
1917 December	KHAIRUNNISA dies (mother of Ali Muhammad).
1918	AMIR dies (daughter of Barkat & Muhammad Husain, and wife of Zuhurul Haq).
1918	MASUD I born (son of Hamid & Sardar).
1918	MUHAMMAD SADIQ dies (son of Barkat & Muhammad Husain).
1918	MUNAWWAR dies (daughter of Barkat & Muhammad Husain).
1918	MAHMUD dies (son of Hamid & Sardar).
1918 February	ABDUL AZIZ moves from Montgomery to Lahore.
1918 April	ABDUR RAHMAN II born (son of Abdul Aziz & Zainab).
1918 November 17	ABDUR RAHMAN II dies (son of Abdul Aziz & Zainab).
1918 December 2	ASHIQ HUSAIN born (son of Allah Rakhi & Muhammad Husain).

1919 April	AKBAR HUSAIN (son of Azizuddin & Sharfunnisa) marries Khurshid.
1919 July 14	HUSANARA born (daughter of Abdul Majid & Iqbal).
1919 December 9	MASUD I dies (son of Hamid & Sardar).
1919 December 26	RAHIM JAN born (son of Ghulam Muhammad & Amir).
1920	ABDUR RAHMAN III born (son of Abdul Aziz & Zainab).
1920	ABDUL AZIZ shifts from McLeod Road to Park Lane, Temple Road.
1920	ABDUL AZIZ starts teaching at Islamia College, Lahore.
1920	HABIB dies (daughter of Fatima & Khairuddin).
1920	MASUD II born (son of Hamid & Sardar).
1920 April	ABDUL HAMID (son of Ghulam Qadir & Piranditti) marries Amna.
1920 October	MAHMUDA dies (daughter of Fatima & Khairuddin)
1921	IKRAM is born (son of Sardar & Ghulam Jilani).
1921 May	IRSHAD born (daughter of Hamid & Amna).
1921 August	ABDUR RAHMAN III dies (son of Abdul Aziz & Zainab).

1921 October 24	BILQUIS born (daughter of Hamid and Sardar).
1922	KHURSHID (daughter of Ghulam Muhammad & Amir) marries Salamatullah.
1922	IKRAMUL HAQ born (husband of Irshad Hamid).
1922	OWAIS born (son of Hamid and Sardar).
1922 January 12	FAHMIDA born (daughter of Akbar Husain & Khurshid).
1922 January 29	JAHANARA born (daughter of Majid & Iqbal).
1922 May	FATIMA dies (daughter of Ghulam Nabi & Nur, and wife of Khairuddin).
1923	ABDUL AZIZ shifts from Park Lane to his own bungalow on Qutb Road.
1923	PIRANDITTI dies (wife of Ghulam Qadir and mother of Zainab).
1923	FAKHIRA born (daughter of Abdul Aziz & Zainab).
1923	ANWAR born (daughter of Hamid and Amna).
1923 February 28	ZULQARNAIN born (son of Dastagir & Ummat).
1924	AZIZUDDIN dies (son of Waziruddin and Zuhra).

1924	GHULAM NABI is struck with paralysis.
1924	SALIMA born (daughter of Sardar & Ghulam Jilani).
1924	FAKHIRA dies (daughter of Abdul Aziz & Zainab).
1924	OWAIS dies (son of Hamid & Sardar).
1924 January 26	SURAYYA born (daughter of Khurshid & Salamatullah).
1924 March 30	HABIB dies (daughter of Barkat & Shah Din, and wife of Abdul Majid).
1924 June 10	KHURSHID-UZ-ZAMAN born (son of Hamid and Amna).
1925 March 8	KISHWAR born (daughter of Abdul Aziz & Zainab).
1925 December 30	MAJID (son of Ghulam Qadir & Piranditti) marries Iqbal (daughter of Barkst & Shah Din).
1926	ABDUR RASHID (son of Ghulam Qadir & Piranditti) leaves home.
1926	ABDUL AZIZ resigns from Islamia College, and family shifts to Ballamabad.
1926 January 14	Zubair born (son of Hamid & Sardar).
1926 January 21	ANWAR born (daughter of Akbar Husain & Khurshid).
1926 February	GHULAM NABI dies (son of Waziruddin & Zuhra).

1926 March	MASUD II dies (son of Hamid & Sardar).
1926 September 26	MUSLIM PARWEZ born (son of Khurshid & Salamatullah).
1927 January	WAHEED-UZ-ZAMAN born (son of Hamid & Amna).
1927 July 23	SHAMIM born (daughter of Hamid & Sardar).
1927 November	KHAWAR born (daughter of Sardar & Ghulam Jilani).
1927 December 11	KHURSHEED KAMAL born (son of Abdul Aziz & Zainab).
1928 January 4	SALAHUDDIN born (husband of Farida Hamid).
1928 April 13	MUMTAZ (daughter of Ghulam Muhammad & Amir) marries Zahid.
1928 June	KHAIRUDDIN dies (husband of Fatima).
1928 August 19	NASIM born (daughter of Hamid & Sardar).
1928 December 17	SHIREEN born (daughter of Khurshid & Salamatullah).
1929	MUMTAZ dies (daughter of Sultan & Muhammad Ali).
1929 February 13	ZULFIQAR born (son of Dastagir & Ummat).
1929 March 10	AQILA born (daughter of Mumtaz & Zahid).

1929 June	RABIA born (daughter of Sardar & Ghulam Jilani).
1930	SITARA born (daughter of Dastagir & Ummat).
1930 January 14	KHALID MAHMUD ARIF born (son of Akbar Husain & Khurshid).
1930 April 8	SAEEDA born (daughter of Khurshid & Salamatullah).
1930 December 27	MUHAMMAD HASAN (son of Fatima & Khairuddin) marries Rasheeda.
1930 December 28	AKHTAR (daughter of Abdul Aziz & Zainab) marries Ahmad Hasan (son of Fatima & Khairuddin).
1930 December 29	JAMIL HASAN (son of Fatima & Khairuddin) marries Hanifa (daughter of Amir and Zuhurul Haq).
1931 March 12	FARRUKH born (wife of Rahim Jan).
1931 March	FAKHIRA born (daughter of Hamid & Sardar).
1931 March	SARDAR dies (wife of Hamid).
1931 March	FAKHIRA dies (daughter of Hamid & Sardar).
1932 March 25	HAMID (son of Ghulam Nabi & Nur) marries Farrukh.
1932 July 8	TARIQ HAMEED born (husband of Rifat Hamid).

1932 July 22	MUBARIKA born (daughter of Khurshid & Salamatullah).
1932 October 23	HAKIM JAN (son of Ghulam Muhammad & Amir) marries Sughra.
1932 December	KHALEEQ-UZ-ZAMAN born. (son of Hamid & Amna).
1933 April 18	SHIREEN born (daughter of Hamid & Farrukh).
1933 July 14	SHAHID born (son of Mumtaz & Zahid).
1933 October 8	ASGHAR ALI born (son of Hakim Jan & Sughra).
1933 November 11	RAZIA (daughter of Abdul Aziz & Zainab) marries Bashir Ahmad.
1934 May 20	WAZIR dies (daughter of Ghulam Nabi & Nur).
1934 June 20	SALMAN born (son of Hamid & Farrukh).
1934 June 23	ZARINA RAFI born (wife of Khursheed Kamal).
1934 September	FAMILY shifts to Lahore from Ballamabad.
1934 September 30	AHMAD MAHMUD TABASSUM born (son of Akbar Husain & Khurshid).
1934 October 2	ZARINA born (daughter of Khurshid & Salamatullah).
1935	SAEED born (son of Dastagir & Ummat).

1935	NARGIS born (daughter of Hamid & Amna).
1935 February 22	AZHAR ALI born (son of Hakim Jan & Sughra).
1935 May 31	AZIZ dies (daughter of Sardar & Ghulam Jilani).
1935 May 31	SALIMA dies (daughter of Sardar & Ghulam Jilani).
1935 September 13	TARIQ born (son of Hamid & Farrukh).
1935 November 3	AMIR dies (wife of Ghulam Muhammad).
1936 April 3	PARVEEN born (wife of Salman Khan).
1936 September 26	SALEEM born (son of Khurshid & Salamatullah)
1937 October	FAMILY moves from Lahore to Batala.
1937 November 24	RIFAT born (daughter of Hamid & Farrukh).
1937 December 25	KHURRAM born (son of Hamid & Amna).
1938 February 2	MAZHARUL HAQ born (husband of Zeenat, and the daughter of Fahmida & Fazl-i-Elahi).
1939	FAZL BIBI dies (second wife of Azizuddin).
1939 March 17	FARIDA born (daughter of Hamid & Farrukh).
1939 June 3	KHALID born (son of Mumtaz & Zahid).

1940 September	AZIZ dies (daughter of Allah Rakhi & Muhammad Husain)
1940 November	SHIREEN dies (daughter of Hamid & Farrukh).
1941	SIKANDAR dies (son of Sardar & Ghulam J:lani).
1941 April	GHULAM AHMAD GUL (son of Ghulam Muhammad & Amir). marries Bilquis (daughter of Muhammad Hayat).
1941 April	FAHMIDA (daughter of Ghulam Muhammad & Amir) marries Fazl-i-Elahi.
1941 April 13	BILQUIS (daughter of Hamid & Sardar) marries Muhammad Bashir Khan Malik.
1941 December	SURAYYA (daughter of Khurshid & Salamatullah) marries Mahmud Alam.
1942	ATIYYA born (daughter of Mumtaz & Zahid).
1942 September	FAMILY shifts from Batala to Lahore.
1942 October 9	SULTAN dies (daughter of Ghulam Nabı & Nur, and wife of Muhammad Ali).
1943 March 28	RIAZ born (son of Gul & Bilquis).
1943 September 13	HAMID dies (son of Ghulam Nabi & Nur, and husband of Sardar and Farrukh).
1943 December 3	JAHANARA (daughter of Majid & Iqbal) marries Abdur Rahim.

1944	TARIQ born (son of Mumtaz and Zahid).
1944	MUHAMMAD ALI (former husband of Sultan) marries Shahnaz.
1944 April	ZUBAIDA (daughter of Muhammad Hayat & Zainab) marries Fazl-i-Haq.
1944 April (?)	SULAIMAN SALIM MAHMUD dies (son of Akbar Husain & Khurshid).
1944 August 2	FAYYAZ born (son of Gul and Bilquis).
1944 September 30	GHULAM HASAN (son of Fatima & Khairuddin marries) Shamim (daughter of Hamid & Sardar).
1944 October 8	FAHMIDA (daughter of Akbar Husain & Khurshid) marries Yusuf Zafar.
1944 October 16	FIDA HUSAIN (son of Allah Rakhi & Muhammad Husain) marries Kaniz (daughter of Muhsin Ali & Nawab).
1945 March 22	SHIREEN dies (daughter of Khurshid & Salamatullah).
1946	RUKHSANA born (daughter of Mumtaz & Zahid).
1946 May	GHULAM MUHAMMAD dies (son of Waziruddin and Zuhra).
1946 December 25 (?)	ANWAR (daughter of Akbar Husain & Khurshid) marries Aurungzeb.
1946 December 30	JAHANARA dies (daughter of Majid & Iqbal, and wife of Abdur Rahim).

1947 January	MUHAMMAD HUSAIN dies (son of Azizuddin & Sharfunnisa, and husband of Barkat).
1947 January 10	EJAZ born (son of Gul & Bilquis).
1947 April	YUSUF GHAZNAVI (son of Sardar & Ghulam Jilani) marries Razia.
1947 April 11	KHURSHID dies (daughter of Ghulam Muhammad & Amir, and wife of Salamatullsh).
1947 October 8	RABIA dies (daughter of Sardar & Ghulam Jilani).
1947 November	ALI MUHAMMAD dies.
1947 December	KISHWAR (daughter of Abdul Aziz & Zainab) marries Ziaul Haq alias Yusuf (son of Amir & Zuhurul Haq).
1948 January 4	IRSHAD (daughter of Hamid & Amna) marries Ikramul Haq (son of Sardar & Muhammad Din).
1948 January 8	BARKAT dies (daughter of Ghulam Nabi & Nur, and wife of Muhammad Husain).
1948 June 20	ZAINAB dies (daughter of Ghulam Qadir & Piranditti, and wife of Abdul Aziz).
1948 August 18	ENAIT KIBRIA (son of Firoz & Abdul Wahid) marries Saeeda (daughter of Khurshid & Salamatullah).
1948 October 31	NASIM (daughter of Hamid & Sardar) marries Ghulam Sarwar.

1949	GHULAM AHMAD GUL (son of Ghulam Muhammad & Amir) marries Nadira.
1949	MUHAMMAD HAYAT dies.
1949 August 14	HUSANARA (daughter of Majid & Iqbal) marries Muhammad Husain.
1949 August 16	ZEENAT born (daughter of Fahmida & Fazl-i-Elahi).
1950	MAHMUDA (daughter of Muhammad Hayat & Zainab) marries Nazir Ahmad.
1950 April 14 (?)	RAHIM JAN (son of Ghulam Muhammad & Amir) marries Farrukh.
1951 August 25	KHAWAR dies (daughter of Sardar & Ghulam Jilani).
1952 February 5	AQILA (daughter of Mumtaz & Zahid) marries Mahmud Jan.
1952 June 10	FARIDA born (daughter of Gul & Bilquis).
1952 July 18	GULNAFER born (daughter of Rahim Jan & Farrukh).
1953	MUSLIM PARWEZ SALAMAT (son of Khurshid & Salamatullah) marries Dolores.
1953 August 20	HUSANARA dies (daughter of Majid & Iqbal, and wife of Muhammad Husain).
1954 July 23	MUNIR (son of Muhammad Hayat & Zainab) marries Nadira.

1955	ZUBAIR (son of Hamid & Sardar) marries Razia (daughter of Dr. M. Saeed of Karachi).
1955 February 12	KHURSHEED KAMAL (son of Abdul Aziz & Zainab) marries Zarina (daughter of Dr. K.M. Rafi & Majid Begam).
1955 July 25	BARKAT dies (wife of Shah Din).
1955 August	ASHIQ HUSAIN (son of Allah Rakhi & Muhammad Husain) marries Ruqayya (daughter of Muhsin Ali & Nawab).
1955 October 17	SHALALE born (daughter of Rahim Jan & Farrukh).
1955 December 22	KHALID MAHMUD ARIF (son of Akbar Husain & Khurshid) marries Khalida.
1956	ZUBAIR divorces Razia.
1956 May	RUQAYYA dies (wife of Ashiq Husain, and daughter of Muhsin Ali & Nawab).
1957 September 18	ANWAR (daughter of Hamid & Amna) marries Iqbal Qureshi.
1958 April 30	IQBAL dies (daughter of Sardar & Shah Din and wife of Majid).
1958 May 5	MAHREEN born (daughter of Rahim Jan & Farrukh).
1958 October	GHULAM JILANI dies (husband of Sardar).
1959	ABDUR RASHID (son of Ghulam Qadir & Piranditti) returns home.

1959 April 26	AHMAD MAHMUD Tabassum (son of Akbar Husain & Khurshid) marries Nasreen.
1959 November 7	RIFAT (daughter of Hamid & Farrukh) marries Tariq Hameed.
1960 November	ASHIQ HUSAIN (son of Allah Rakhi & Muhammad Husain) marries Shahnaz.
1961 January 16	SALMAN (son of Hamid & Farrukh) marries Parveen.
1961 January 29	FARIDA (daughter of Hamid & Farrukh) marries Salahuddin.
1961 July 14	ABDUL WAHID dies (husband of Firoz).
1962 December 29	SHAHID (son of Mumtaz & Zahid) marries Shireen.
1963 January 28	HAKIM JAN dies (son of Ghulam Muhammad & Amir, and husband of Sughra).
1963 April 26	ASGHAR ALI (son of Hakim Jan & Sughra) marries Thelessa.
1963 May 17	MUHAMMAD HUSAIN dies (husband of Husanara).
1963 November	SARDAR dies (wife of Ghulam Jilani).
1963 November 30	AKBAR HUSAIN dies (son of Azizuddin & Sharfunnisa).
1964 August 9	WAHEED-UZ-ZAMAN (son of Hamid & Amna) marries Bushra.

1965 March 1	ALLAH RAKHI dies (daughter of Ghulam Nabi & Nur, and wife of Muhammad Husain).
1966 September 14	SAEEDA dies (daughter of Khurshid & Salamatullah and wife of Enait Kibria).
1968	ZUHURUL HAQ dies (husband of Amir).
1968 September 14	MAJID dies (son of Ghulam Qadir & Piranditti).
1968 September 14/15	MUHAMMAD HASAN dies (son of Fatima & Khairuddin).
1968 November 17	KHALEEQ-UZ-ZAMAN (son of Hamid & Amna) marries Saeeda.
1969 October 25	ZEENAT (daughter of Fahmida & Fazl-i-Elahi) marries Mazharul Haq.
1969 November 12	KHURSHID dies (wife of Akbar Husain).
1969 December 16	FIDA HUSAIN dies (son of Allah Rakhi & Muhammad Husain, and husband of Kaniz).
1970	KHALEEQ-UZ-ZAMAN (son of Hamid & Amna) divorces Saeeda.
1970 October 3	NARGIS (daughter of Hamid & Amna) marries Akram Qureshi.
1970 October 7	FIROZ dies (daughter of Ghulam Muhammad & Amir, and wife of Abdul Wahid).
1970 December 15/16	ABDUL AZIZ dies (son of Ghulam Nabi & Nur).
1971 April 7	ZUBAIR dies (son of Hamid & Sardar).

1972 January 24	RAZIA dies (daughter of Abdul Aziz & Zainab, and wife of Bashir Ahmad).
1972 February 13	KHALID (son of Mumtaz & Zahid) marries Samina (daughter of Ghulam Ahmad Gul & Nadira).
1972 April 9	ASGHAR ALI dies (son of Hakim Jan & Sughra).
1973 April	NASIM dies (daughter of Hamid & Sardar, and wife of Ghulam Sarwar).
1973 November 25	KHURSHID-UZ-ZAMAN (son of Hamid & Amna) marries Surayya Azim.
1973 December	GULNAFER (daughter of Rahim Jan & Farrukh) marries Muzaffar Ghaffar.
1974 April 21	TARIQ (son of Mumtaz & Zahid) marries Neelam.
1974 July 11	IQBAL QURESHI dies (husband of Anwar Hamid).
1974 November 16	KHURRAM (son of Hamid & Amna) marries Shakila Yunus.
1974 November 23	TARIQ (son of Hamid & Farrukh) marries Nishat.
1977 December 11	ABDUR RASHID dies (son of Ghulam Qadir & Piranditti).
1978	ZAMAN (son of Muhammad Hayat & Zainab) marries Rahat.

1978 February 28	HAMID dies (son of Ghulam Qadir & Piranditti, and husband of Amna).
1978 July 1	SALAMATULLAH dies (husband of Khurshid).
1979 September 30	AHMAD HASAN dies (son of Fatima & Khairuddin, and husband of Akhtar).
1980 October 19	BILQUIS dies (daughter of Hamid & Sardar, and wife of Muhammad Bashir Khan Malik).
1981 May 17	FAZL-I-ELAHI KHAN dies (husband of Fahmida).
1982	KHALEEQ-UZ-ZAMAN (son of Hamid and Amna) marries Nighat.
1982 May 26	MUHAMMAD SADIQ dies (son of Allah Rakhi & Muhammad Husain).
1982 July 29	SUGHRA dies (wife of Hakim Jan).
1983 September 6	GHULAM AHMAD GUL dies (son of Ghulam Muhammad & Amir, and husband of Bilquis and Nadira).
1985 February 28	AURUNGZEB dies (husband of Anwar Akbar Husain).
1985 May 19	IKRAMUL HAQ dies (husband of Irshad Hamid).
1986	ABDUR RAHIM dies (husband of Jahanara).
1986 May 17	BASHIR AHMAD dies (husband of Razia Abdul Aziz).

1986 November 23	KISHWAR dies (daughter of Abdul Aziz & Zainab).
1987 January 10	KANIZ dies (wife of Fida Huain, and daughter of Muhsin Ali & Nawab).
1987 March 14	YUSUF ZAFAR dies (husband of Fahmida Akbar Husain).
1987 August 5	ENAIT KIBRIA dies (son of Firoz & Abdul Wahid, and husband of Saeeda Salamat).
1988 February 3	IKRAM GHUZNAVI dies (son of Sardar and Ghulam Jilani).
1988 October 1	WAHEED-UZ-ZAMAN dies (son of Hamid & Amna, and husband of Bushra).
1988 December 15	ZAINAB dies (wife of Muhammad Hayat).
1994 May 23	ZAHID dies (husband of Mumtaz).
1995 June 12	AKHTAR dies (daughter of Abdul Aziz & Zainab, and wife of Ahmad Hasan).
1998	SULEMAN KHAN dies (son of Sardar & Ghulam Jilani, and husband of Jamila).
2000 March 23	SHALALE (daughter of Rahim Jan & Farrukh) marries Falahuddin.
2001 March 24	MUHAMMAD BASHIR KHAN MALIK dies (husband of Bilquis Hamid).
2003 June 14	MUMTAZ dies (daughter of Dr. Ghulam Muhammad).

APPENDIX II

A NOTE ON THE KAKKEZAIS

My family belongs to the Kakkezai *biradari* or caste.

There are many traditions current among the Kakkezais about their Pathan origins. They are said to have entered India from Afghanistan with the armies of Mahmud Ghaznavi and then again later with the troops of the Lodhis. Probably the first place, or one of the earliest spots, where they settled was Watlai, near the Afghan frontier, now forming a part of the Bajaur territory on the north-west of Pakistan and in the past for some time a part of the Dir State. The main township of the area is now Khar. The territory is inhabited by a Pathan tribe called Mamund (with a long "a", and different from the Mahmund tribe). The Mạmunds, who are a part of the bigger Turkani or Turkanhri tribe, are divided into two branches: Loi Mamund and Warhe Mamund. The Loi Mamund call themselves Kakkezais; sometimes they also refer to themselves as Kakkezai Turkani. Their present-day settlements straddle the Pakistan-Afghanistan boundary line.

It is believed that these people enlisted in the various invading armies from Mahmud Ghaznavi's time onwards and helped them to conquer the Punjab. Once having spent some time in the lush, evergreen land of the five rivers and contrasting it with the dry, rocky, waterless territory from where they had come, they decided to stay on. They settled in the Punjab and married local women. They were spread over the various parts of the province, and the local affiliation and habitat determined their caste prefix or suffix: Shaikh or Khan or Malik. But they still maintained contact

with their brethren left behind in Bajaur. It was only in or around the year 1800 that, with the Punjab and the frontier territory having been made safe from any invasions from the north, they broke their links with their original home.

Other traditions place their original home in Seistan. Those who deny the Kakkezais their Afghan origin say that they are converted Indians who embraced Islam in the earlier days of Muslim rule over the north-west of the subcontinent; but later called themselves Afghans in order to avoid the stigma of being local converts and also to count themselves among the foreign elite. One group of Kakkezais living in Shahdara near Lahore claim that they are the descendants of a band of architects who were brought from Afghanistan on the orders of Nurjahan or Emperor Shahjahan to build the mausoleum of Emperor Jahangir; having done their duty they decided to settle down near the mausoleum.

Whatever the truth in these versions, there is no doubt that the Kakkezais themselves believe in their Afghan origin, announce it on all social occasions, at times flaunt it in the face of the Khoja Shaikhs to show their own superiority, and sometimes declare it flamboyantly by putting two "Khans" to their names: one at the beginning and the other at the end, for example, Khan Ahmad Hasan Khan.

The Kakkezais are scattered all over the Punjab and the Hazara tract of the North-West Frontier Province, but in uneven strength. In 1921, for example, they numbered 21,664 in the province, with the largest settlements in the districts of Hoshiarpur (766), Lahore (2,375), Amritsar (1,161), Gurdaspur (4,712), Gujranwala (1,269), Gujerat (816), Jehlum (986), and Lyallpur (3,595).

In 1901, there were 2,268 Kakkezais in tahsil Gurdaspur and 1,996 in tahsil Batala. In 1911, the district of Gurdaspur had 4,776, and in 1921 4,712. In the district, Kakkezais lived in some strength in Gurdaspur, Batala,

Dharamkot-Randhawa, Kalanaur, Sujjanpur, Chak Faizullah, Bahbal Chak and Shahabpura.


Rani Sada Kaur's chief adviser and virtually the governor of Batala was a Kakkezai, Shaikh Gamé Khan (probably Ghulam Muhammad), who recruited and trained a Kakkezai detachment of cavalry. The two brave soldiers of this troop who rescued Mahtab Kaur from Lahore and brought her to Batala were both Kakkezai: Malik Bassé Khan and Muhammad Ali Khan.

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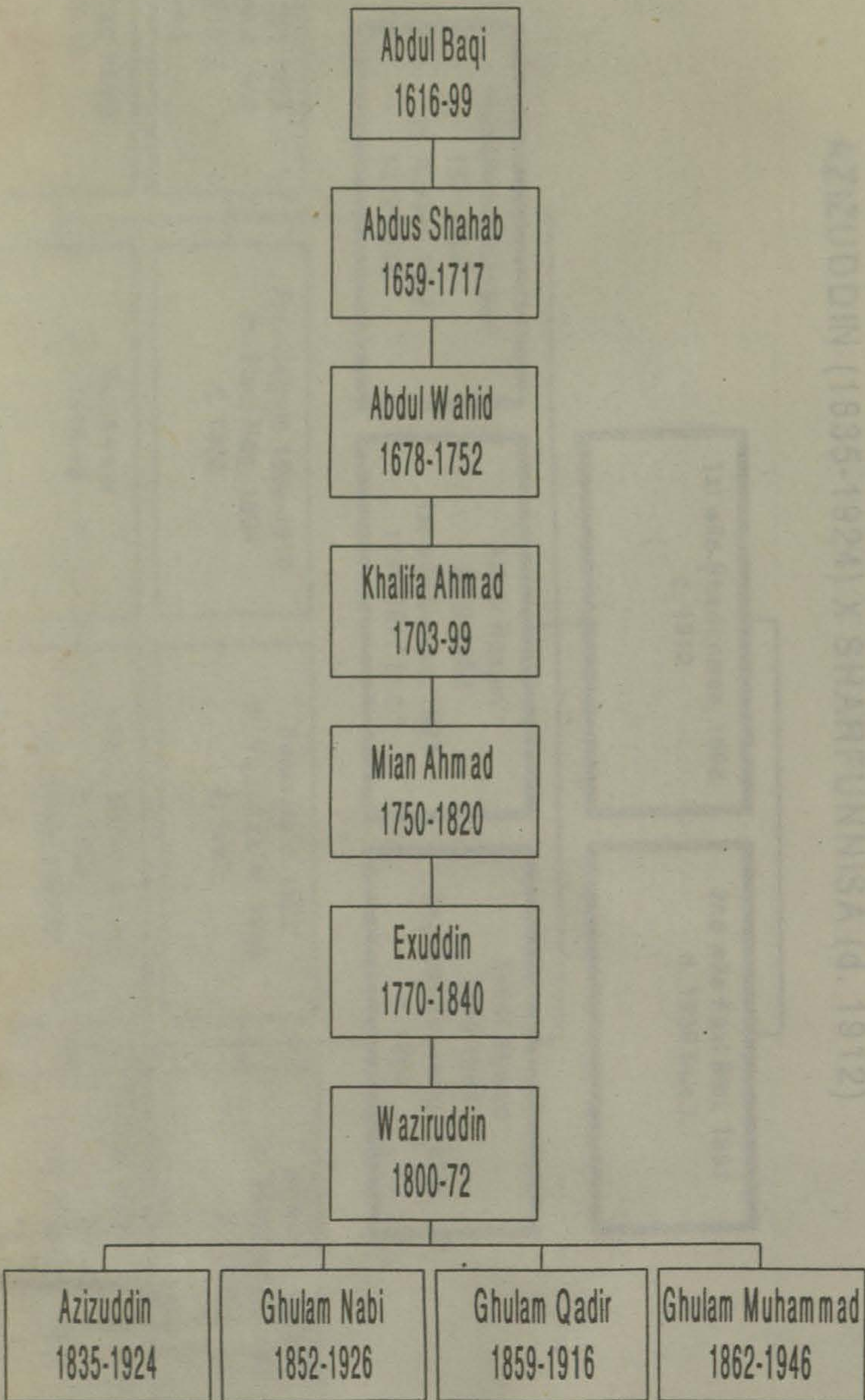
ABBREVIATIONS

x	married
n.m.	not married
b.	born
d.	died
n.c.	no children
?	not known

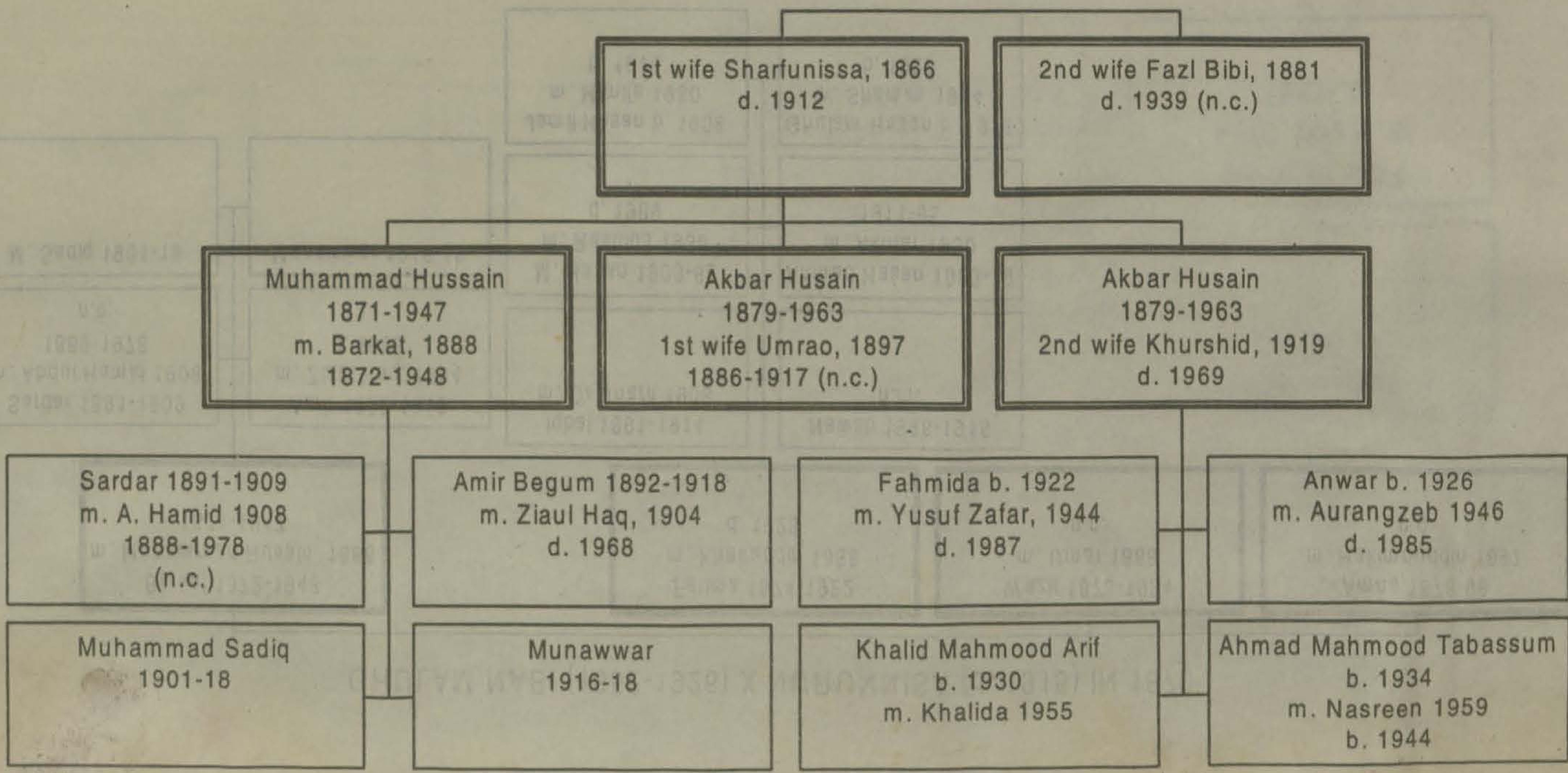
GENEOLOGICAL TREES



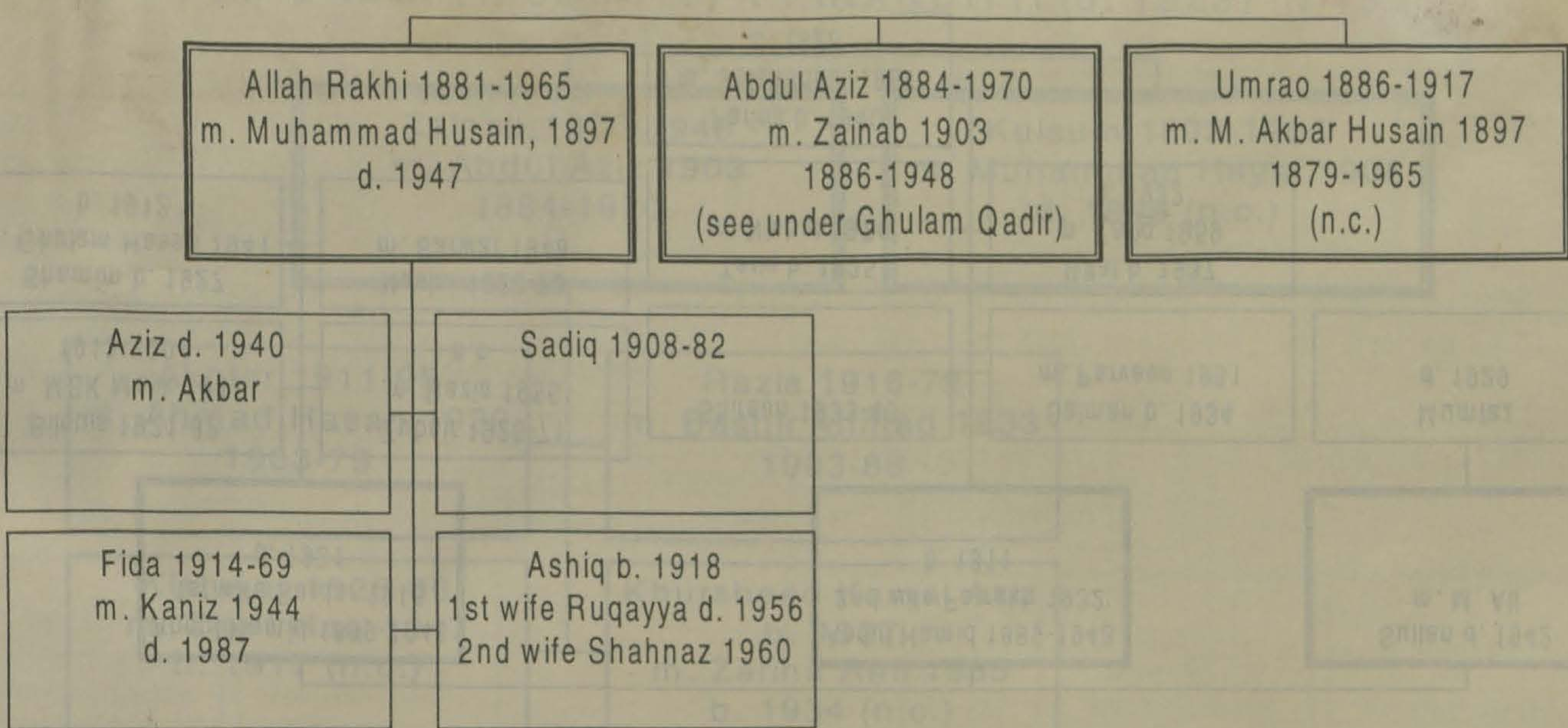
THE ELDERS


Abdul Baqi
1616-99
Abdus Shahab
1659-1717
Abdul Wahid
1678-1752
Khalifa Ahmad
1703-99
Mian Ahmad
1750-1820
Exuddin
1770-1840
Waziruddin
1800-72
Azizuddin
1835-1924
Ghulam Nabi
1852-1926
Ghulam Qadir
1859-1916
Ghulam Muhammad
1862-1946

AZIZUDDIN (1835-1924) X SHARFUNNISA (d. 1912)



GHULAM NABI (1852-1926) X NURUNNISA (d. 1915) (continued)



continued on next page

GHULAM NABI (1852-1926) X NURUNNISA (d. 1915) IN 1870

- **Barkat 1872-1948**
  m. Muhammad Husain, 1888
  1871-1947
  - Sardar 1891-1909
    m. Abdul Hamid 1908
    1889-1978
    n.c.
  - Amir 1892-1918
    m. Ziaul Haq, 1904
    d. 1968
  - M. Sadiq 1901-18
  - Munawwar 1916-18
- **Fatima 1874-1922**
  m. Khairuddin 1888
  d. 1928
  - Iqbal 1891-1914
    m. Dr Sharif 1908
  - Nawab 1898-1915
    n.m.
  - M. Hasan 1900-68
    m. Rashida 1930
    d. 1989
  - Ahmad Hasan 1903-79
    m. Akhtar 1930
    1911-95
  - Jamil Hasan b. 1908
    m. Hanifa 1930
    b. 1914
  - Ghulam Hasan b. 1912
    m. Shamim 1944
    b. 1927
- **Wazir 1876-1934**
  m. Umar 1888
  n.c.
- **Amna 1878-98**
  m. Hakimduddin 1897
  n.c.

continued on next page

GHULAM NABI (1852-1926) X NURUNNISA (d. 1915) (continued)

- **Abdul Hamid 1889-1943, 1st wife Sardar 1916, d. 1931**
  - Bilquis 1921-82, m. MBK Malik 1941, 1913-2001
  - Zubair 1926-71, m. Razia 1955, n.c.
  - Shamim b. 1927, m. Ghulam Hasan 1941, b. 1912
  - Nasim 1928-73, m. Sarwar 1948
- **Abdul Hamid 1889-1943, 2nd wife Farrukh 1932, b. 1911**
  - Shireen 1933-40
  - Salman b. 1934, m. Parveen 1961
  - Tariq b. 1935, m. Nishat 1974
  - Rifat b. 1937, m. Tariq 1959, b. 1932
  - Farida b. 1940, m. Salahuddin 1961, b. 1928
- **Sultan d. 1942, m. M. Ali**
  - Mumtaz, d. 1929

GHULAM QADIR (1860-1916) X PIRANDITTI (d. 1923) IN 1880

- **Zainab 1886-1948, m. Abdul Aziz 1903, 1884-1970**
  - Akhtar 1911-95, m. Ahmad Hasan 1930, 1903-79
  - Razia 1916-72, m. Bashir Ahmad 1933, 1903-86
  - Kishwar 1925-86, m. Ziaul Haq 1947, b. 1917 (n.c.)
  - Khursheed Kamal Aziz, b. 1927, m. Zarina Rafi 1955, b. 1934 (n.c.)
- **Kulsum 1892-1906, m. Muhammad Hayat 1905, d. 1949 (n.c.)**

continued on next page

GHULAM QADIR (1860-1916) X PIRANDITTI (d. 1923) (continued)

- Abdul Hamid 1888-1978
  1st wife Sardar 1908
  1891-1909 (n.c.)
- Abdul Hamid 1888-1978
  2nd wife Amna 1920
  1900-93
  - Irshad b. 1921
    m. Ikramul Haq 1948
    1922-85
  - Anwar b. 1923
    m. Iqbal 1957
    d. 1974
  - Khursheed-uz-Zaman b. 1924
    m. Surayya 1973
    d. 2004
  - Waheed-uz-Zaman 1927-88
    m. Bushra 1964
    d. 2003
  - Khaleeq-uz-Zaman
    1st wife Saeeda 1968 (n.c.)
    2nd wife Nighat 1982
  - Nargis b. 1935
    m. Akram 1970
    (n.c.)
  - Khurram b. 1937
    m. Shakila 1974
    (n.c.)
- Abdul Majid 1894-1968
  1st wife Habib 1916
  1899-1924
  - Husanara 1919-53
    m. Muhammad Husain 1949
    d. 1963
  - Jahanara 1922-46
    m. Abdur Rahim 1943
    d. 1986
- Abdul Majid 1894-1968
  2nd wife Iqbal 1925
  d. 1911-58 (n.c.)
- Abdur Rashid 1899-1977
  n.m.

GHULAM MUHAMMAD (1862-1946) X AMIR BEGUM (d. 1935) IN 1895

- Firoz 1899-1970
  m. Abdul Wahid 1914
  1894-1961
  - Enait Kibria 1916-87
    m. Saeeda 1948
    1930-66
- Hakim Jan 1901-63
  m. Sughra 1932
  1906-82
  - Asghar Ali 1933-72
    m. Thelessa 1963
  - Azhar Ali b. 1935
    n.m.
- Khurshid 1904-47
  m. Salamatullah 1922
  d. 1978
  - Surayya b. 1924
    m. Mahmud Alam 1941
  - Muslim b. 1926
    m. Dolores 1953
  - Saeeda 1930-66
    m. Enait Kibria 1948
    1916-87
  - Mubarika b. 1932
    n.m.
  - Zarina b. 1934
    m. Afzal Iqbal
    n.c.
  - Salim b. 1936
    m. Musarrat

continued on next page

GHULAM MUHAMMAD (1862-1946) X AMIR BEGUM (d. 1935) IN 1895 (continued)

- **Mumtaz 1909-2003 m. Zahid 1927**
  - Aqila b. 1929 m. Mahmud Jan 1952
  - Shahid b. 1934 m. Shireen 1962
  - Khalid b. 1939 m. Samina 1972
  - Atiyya b. 1942 m. Qayyum
  - Tariq b. 1944 m. Nilam 1974
  - Rukhsana b. 1946 m. Aziz
- **G.A. Gul 1912-83 1st wife Bilquis 1941**
  - Riaz b. 1942
  - Fayyaz b. 1943
  - Ejaz
  - Farida
- **G.A. Gul 1912-83 2nd wife Nadira ?1944**
  - Shaista
  - Shamim
  - Shahzad
  - Anjum
  - Sajad
  - Naila
- **Fahmida b. 1917 m. Fazl-i-Elahi 1941 d. 1981**
  - Zeenat b. 1950 m. Mazhar 1969 m. Mumtaz Bhutto
- **Rahim Jan b. 1919 m. Farrukh 1950**
  - Gul-i-Nifar b. 1952 m. Mazhar 1973
  - Shalaleh b. 1955 m. Falahuddin 2000
  - Bahrein b. 1958 m. Mahmud

SHAH DIN (d. 1911) X BARKAT (d. 1955)

- **Sardar 1889-1963**, m. Ghulam Jillani 1903, d. 1958
  - Sultan Mahmud, 1904-71, m. Hamid
  - Aziz Sultana, 1909-35, m. Bashir Ahmad
  - Sultan Sikandar, 1911-42, m. Amna
  - Yusuf Ghaznavi, 1914-72, m. Razia
  - Suleiman Khan, 1917-98, m. Jamila
  - Ikram Ghaznavi, 1921-88, m. Surayya
  - Salima Sultana, 1925-35, n.m.
  - Khawar Sultana, 1927-51, n.m.
  - Rabia Sultana, 1930-47, n.m.
- **Ghulam Dastagir 1896-?**, m. Ummat 1916, 1906-82
  - Zulqarnain, b. 1923
  - Zulfiqar, b. 1929
  - Sitara, b. 1931
  - Son, b. 1938
- **Habib 1899-1924**, m. Abdul Majid 1916, 1894-1968
  - Husanara 1919-53
  - Jahanara 1922-46
- **Iqbal 1911-58**, m. Abdul Majid 1925, 1894-1968, n.c.



Dr Ghulam Nabi: 1905
(Grandfather)



Abdul Aziz c. 1917
(Father)



Zainab Khatun (1886-1947)
(Mother)



A group photograph at Batala, c. 1917

On the floor: (L to R) Ghulam Hasan, Sadiq, Hakim Jan, Muhammad Hasan.
Chairs: (L to R) Abdul Hamid (*chacha*), Abdul Aziz, Muhammad Husain, Akbar Husain, Abdul Hamid (*maman*)

THE MOCK PARLIAMENT
ISLAMIA COLLEGE, LAHORE 1923-24



On the floor: Abdul Rahim, Zarif Hussain, Fazal Ilahi.
Chairs L to R: Shabbir Hussain, Muhammad Shafi, Zafar Ali, Mahbub Elahi, Prof. Abdul Aziz, B.A. Zia-ul-Islam, Inayat Ullah, Nazir Hussain, Abdul Hakim.
Standing
1st Row L to R: Muhammad Iqbal, Muhammad Hussain, Muhammad Rafiq, A.R. Changez, Abdous Salam, Mustafa Hussain, Shabbir Hussain, F.A. Aziz, Muhammad Iqbal, B.B. Varsi.
2nd Row L to R: D.H. Bokhari, Zegham Hussain, Nur Alam, Abdul Rashid, Muhammad Ashraf, Mubarak Hasan, Hidayat Ali.
3rd Row L to R: Muzruf-ud-Din, Abdul Quadir, Abdul Aziz, Muhammad Hasan.



A group photograph at Islamia College Lahore, c. 1922
Abdul Aziz sitting in the centre.



Abdul Aziz 1937
(Father)

FAMILY GATHERING, BATALA DECEMBER 1940



On the floor: Servant, Ghulam Muhammad, Shafaq, Khaleeq, Jamshed, Nasrin, Asif, Ahmad, Khalid, Waheed, Parwaiz, Javed, Parveen, Sirat, Kaniz, Bashir.

Chair L to R: Muhammad Hayat, Akhtar (Asad), Abdul Aziz, Khurshid, Muhammad Husain, Zainab, Akbar Husain, Amna (Khurram), Rashida (Nausherwan), Abdul Hamid (Nargis)

Standing L to R: Jamil, Hasan, Anwar, Fahmida, Hanifan, Abdul Majid, Muhammad Hasan, Ahmad Hasan, Ghulam Hasan, K.K. Aziz, Irshad, Kishwar, Razia.

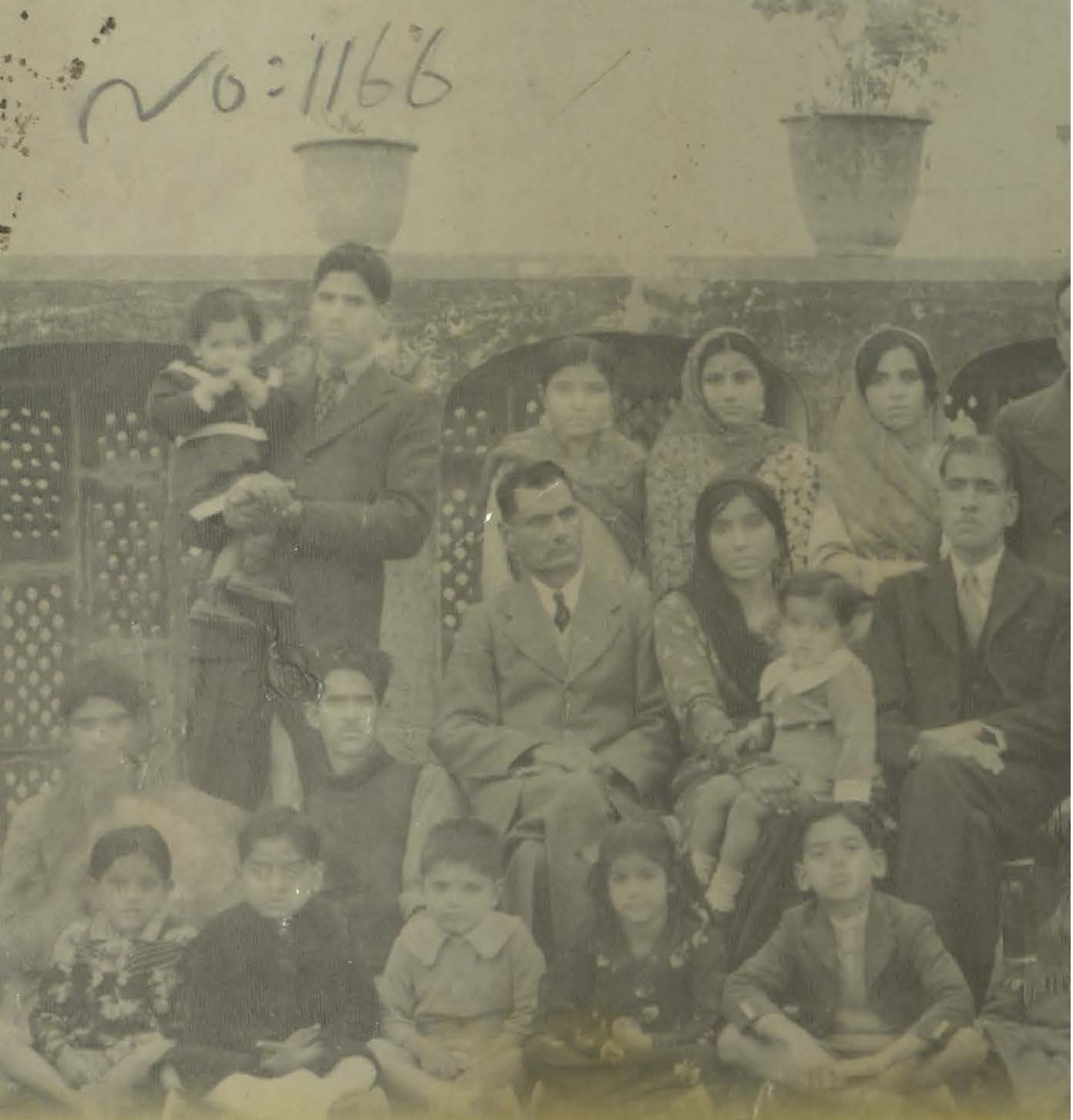


**Abdul Aziz's brother:
Abdul Hamid 1942**

Dr Ghulam Muhammad's Sons and Sons-in-Law



Children: Muslim, Surraya
Sitting L to R: Salamatullah, Hakim Jan, Ghafur (Haji)
Standing L to R: M. Fazl-e-Elahi, Rahim Jan, G.A. Gul.



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